



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Very cold

(IR45p) 40p

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## Israel in race to save peace

**Backlash feared in Hebron after Jew shoots 8 Arabs**

Eric Silver  
Jerusalem

Israeli and Palestinian leaders were struggling yesterday to prevent the actions of a fanatical Jewish gunman from derailing an agreement to redeploy Israeli troops in the last West Bank city under occupation.

An off-duty Israeli soldier sprayed bullets at Palestinian shoppers in a market in the heart of Hebron yesterday in an attempt to sabotage the imminent handover of about 80 per cent of the city to Palestinian self-rule.

After a long day of diplomatic contacts, talks resumed last night at the home of the United States ambassador, Martin Indyk, near Tel Aviv. The two most senior negotiators, the Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, returned to the table.

David Bar-Ilan, chief media adviser to Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, told *The Independent*: "A meeting between Mr Netanyahu and Mr Arafat is possible tonight or tomorrow." He cautioned, however, that there might be delays because of the shooting.

The American mediator Dennis Ross played a key role in bringing the sides together again. He spent the whole of yesterday afternoon in intensive consultations with Mr Arafat in Gaza.

Israeli security forces were on the alert last night after rumours spread from Gaza that the fundamentalist Hamas and Islamic Jihad militias were planning revenge. Khalid Amayreh, a veteran Hebron Arab journalist, commented after the shooting, which wounded eight



Under arrest: Gunman Noam Friedman is taken into custody by Israeli soldiers after being overpowered following his attack in the Hebron market place. Photograph: Reuter

Palestinians: "Had there been a massacre, even Yasser Arafat would not have been able to prevent Hamas avenging the dead."

Mr Netanyahu reacted swiftly to control the damage, telephoning

Mr Arafat to condemn the shooting as "a despicable crime". He reiterated his commitment to the speedy implementation of the Hebron redeployment. "No crime," he promised, "will stand in our way."

Saeb Erakat, a leading Palestinian negotiator, said Mr Netanyahu had to choose between the peace process and appeasing Jewish settlers.

"The Israeli government," Mr Erakat told *The Independent*, "must

choose – either be partners with us in the peace process, or be partners with the extremists and the settlers. They can't have both. This shooting shows how important the peace process is."

In Hebron, the Arab mayor, Mustafa Natshe, urged restraint so that the agreement could be implemented, but complained that Mr Netanyahu talked only about the settlers' security. "He is forgetting the

security of the Palestinians. They are left to the mercy of the settlers and the Israelis."

Shopkeepers in the market where Noam Friedman, a 19-year-old army conscript armed with an M-16 automatic rifle, were less diplomatic. Ahmed Nasser said: "The settlers must be disarmed and moved out of Hebron. There will never be any security here as long as they can carry guns."

David Wilder, a spokesman for the 450 Hebron Jews, drew a contrary, apocalyptic conclusion. "When Arafat's people take over most of the city, thousands of Palestinians could descend on the Jewish quarter in minutes and overwhelm us," he said. "The only solution is to have the Israeli army remain the sole military authority in all of Hebron."

The settlers' spokesman acknowledged, however, that Mr Netanyahu had passed a point of no return. Mr Mordechai, the Defence Minister, reaffirmed during an emergency visit to Hebron that the army was ready to pull out as soon as the politicians gave the order.

Under the agreement, Israel is to hand 80-85 per cent of the city to the Palestinian Authority. It will retain control over the Jewish enclave, where 40 families live in the midst of 150,000 Arabs. Up to 20,000 Palestinian residents will remain under Israeli rule.

The two immediate issues left for yesterday's projected negotiations were a Palestinian demand to share in security arrangements at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a shrine sacred to Jews and Muslims, and the pace at which a main road running through the Jewish enclave would be reopened to Palestinian traffic.

Middle East shaken, page 10

## Tory threatens to bring down Major

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

A second Conservative back-bench MP was last night threatening to withdraw his support from the Government and said the general election should "come sooner rather than later" to stop the "drift" in John Major's Government.

Terry Dicks, MP for Hayes and Harlington and a former ministerial aide, told *The Independent* he would take the whip from David Trimble, the Ulster

Unionist leader, in a vote of confidence on an Ulster issue, even if it brought down the Government.

Mr Dicks is angry at Mr Major's refusal to rule out a single European currency and furious over the use of his name by "cheating" Government whips to win a vote on European fishing policy, but the crunch for him is the risk of more concessions to Sinn Fein in the Ulster talks. "We have given way all down the line. If there is a vote of no confidence, if the Ulster

Unionists don't go with [the Government] on Northern Ireland, I will take their advice on Northern Ireland, rather than the Conservative Party on that."

"I would be surprised if we don't have an election by mid-March. Some of my colleagues are saying the sooner the better... It is just drift now." Although Tony Blair has repeatedly insisted he will not bring the Government down by elections and defections. Mr Dicks, who is stepping down at the election, said: "I have said to the whips, they are playing

their cards close to their chest: I am going to do same."

Ministers may be forced to listen to backbench calls. On New Year's Eve, John Marshall, the Tory MP for Hendon South, wrote to the Chancellor to ask for up to £15m for hardship payments for haemophiliacs who have contracted hepatitis C but who are denied the compensation offered to haemophiliacs with AIDS.

The lack of a majority is opening ministers to ransom from backbenchers. The Prime

Minister will try to rally his troops in an interview on Sunday on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. It will coincide with the launch of the Tory campaign on the "folly" of Labour policies, with no let-up to the election.

John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader, was out campaigning in marginals in West Yorkshire, in spite of the snow drifts. "I am here like all Labour candidates who want to get Labour's message across. It is one that is as white as this snow, unlike the Tories."

**The show goes on, but sport is frozen out**

Louise Jury

The Siberian weather froze out much of the New Year's Day sporting fixtures yesterday amid predictions of more bitter cold conditions to come.

With wind chill taking temperatures down to -21C at Langdon Bay, near Dover, Kent, and most of the country shivering at -7C, even Iceland was warmer than Britain.

Frozen pitches prevented three FA Cup semi-final football games from going ahead and another 25 nationwide League matches fell victim to the cold. Ten matches were lost in the Bell's Scottish League and rugby union and league were also hit.

In racing, which has seen 33 meetings postponed since Boxing Day, the only meeting unaffected was on the all-weather track at Lingfield.



New Year's freeze: Cheerleaders try and get warm yesterday before the London Parade, in which about 8,000 people took part in sub-zero temperatures. Photograph: Andrew Burman

Essex police reported at least 20 motorists abandoned their cars in snowdrifts while widespread snow and ice made conditions hazardous in many other parts of the country. The River Thames turned to sheet ice for several hundred yards between Pangbourne and Streetley, Berkshire. An elderly woman driver in Wales escaped when her car careered off the A458 Welshpool to Dolgellau road and was stopped from

rolling into the River Banwy only by trees on the bank.

But others were less fortunate. In Bristol, a 64-year-old man was killed by a car when he walked on the road to avoid slippery pavements and in Reading an elderly woman was killed when she slipped and fell in front of a car. A woman driver was killed in a car crash at South

Newington, near Banbury, Oxfordshire, and a 26-year-old man died in a head-on collision near Bath. A 17-year-old teenager who had been reported missing by his mother was found dead in a field in Rochford, Essex. Police said the death was "not suspicious".

Continuing concerns over the adequacy of cold weather

### QUICKLY

**IRA 'gangsters'**  
The Northern Ireland Secretary called the IRA "criminal gangsters" after a suspect bomb was found in Belfast. Page 2

### Little readers

A third of all men have not read a book for pleasure for more than five years, according to a survey. Page 3

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# Mayhew dismisses IRA as criminal gangsters

**David McKittrick**  
Ireland correspondent

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, launched a strong attack on the IRA yesterday as army experts spent the day dealing with a suspect bomb in a van in north Belfast.

Bomb-disposal personnel carried out a controlled explosion on a van parked in the grounds of Belfast Castle on

Tuesday night. A telephone caller who gave a recognised IRA codeword said a landmine had been abandoned in the grounds because of security activity in the area.

In a BBC radio interview yesterday, Sir Patrick concentrated his fire on the IRA, saying that the Government had been flexible in the peace process but had had its efforts rejected. He added: "I'm afraid it demon-

strates that those who have said that the IRA are nothing but a lot of criminal gangsters, who will continue to wave the Armalite in one hand while using the ballot box in the other, were right."

The placing of the Belfast Castle device fits into the recently established pattern of the IRA attempting to carry out bomb attacks, in Belfast and elsewhere, every few days. Most

of the attempts have been abortive, for various reasons, but both republicans and the security forces predict it is only a matter of time before one of the attacks "connects" and causes casualties.

The most notorious of the IRA attacks came just before Christmas when a gunman opened fire on police officers in the corridor of children's hospital in Belfast. This caused

widespread condemnation and led to two loyalist bomb attacks.

In another incident, a well-known north Belfast republican, Eddie Copeland, was injured when a booby-trap bomb went off under his car. Another similar device was attached to a vehicle belonging to a former republican prisoner in Londonderry, but this was spotted.

Although no organisation has openly admitted responsi-

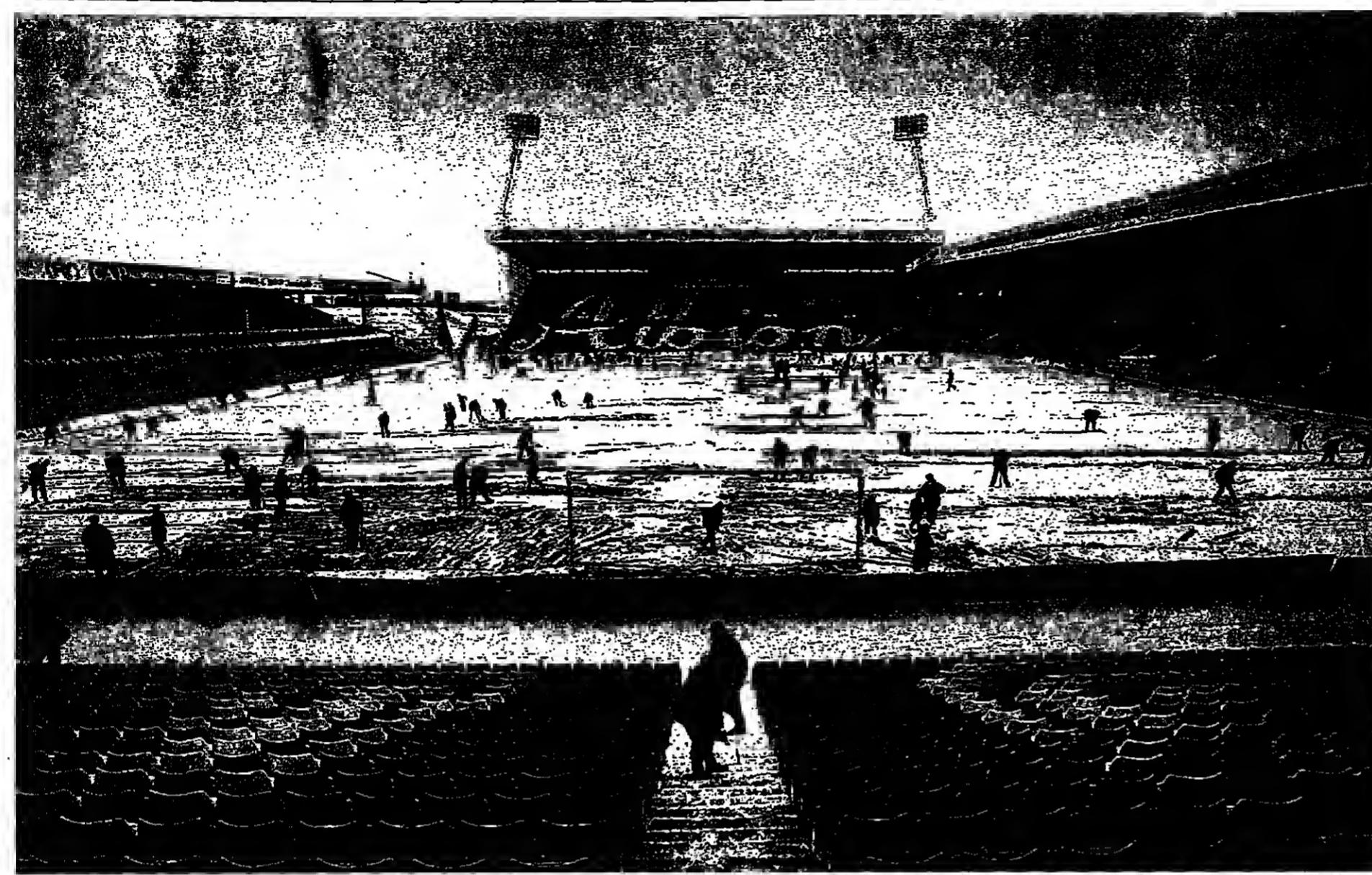
bility for the attacks, security sources hold the Ulster Defence Association responsible. Loyalist sources confirm this privately. In addition to the attacks, two senior republican figures, Martin McGuinness and Belfast councillor Alex Mackay, have been warned by the RUC that their lives are in danger.

Asked yesterday about loyalist violence, Sir Patrick was determinedly reticent, in contrast

to his uninhibited rhetoric against the republicans. He said he did not think the loyalist ceasefire was over, adding of the Copeland bomb attack: "I don't yet know, and I don't think anybody as yet knows, who did that evil thing."

This is at odds with the security assessment that the UDA was undoubtedly responsible. Sir Patrick's circumspection is assumed to be related to the

Stormont political trials, in which a UDA-related group, the Ulster Democratic Party, is taking part. A clear public linkage of the bombings to the UDA would endanger the UDP's continuing involvement in the trials. The Government and most other parties are anxious to avoid the expulsion of the loyalists, which means that at present most are refraining from publicly pointing the finger.



Sporting chance: West Bromwich Albion supporters trying to make the pitch ready for yesterday's game against Tranmere. They succeeded, but West Brom lost the match. Photograph: Gavin Fogg

## Giant Hogmanay cuts London down to size

**Louise Jury**

Thousands braved freezing temperatures to welcome the New Year in Edinburgh, where the size of the celebrations rivalled other traditional gatherings around the world.

The Scottish capital hosted the largest party in Britain with 350,000 people packing the centre of the city. This compared with crowds of 400,000 in Sydney, Australia, and 500,000 in New York. By comparison, only about 70,000 people enjoyed the traditional countdown to midnight in Trafalgar Square, London.

The Scottish celebrations were sponsored this year by McEwan's the brewers and by Richard Branson's Virgin empire. A spokeswoman for the organisers, Unique Events, said: "New York, eat your heart out! The whole city is packed, and this Hogmanay is definitely going to be Edinburgh's and the world's biggest and best. People are coming in from all over the world."

Four hundred police attended helped by 200 stewards and 21 people were arrested for minor offences, most of them alcohol-related. Edinburgh Royal Infirmary treated 322 people. A spokeswoman, Catherine Lang, said most were suffering "acute alcohol abuse to the point of unconsciousness" and there was a "fairly small" number of fractures from people who had fallen over in the snowy, slippery streets.



Animal magic: An inflatable Mighty Mouse was among attractions in the London Parade yesterday. Photograph: Philip Meech

## Colliery deal to cut school heating bills

**Tony Heath**

A consortium of Welsh local councils is poised to sign a contract with the resurgent Tower Colliery that will pare thousands of pounds from heating bills in schools, libraries, old people's homes and town halls.

The deal with the colliery, near Aberdare, comes on the second anniversary of the workers' take-over of the pit which was saved from closure when £40m each chipped in £8,000 redundancy money to run it as a co-operative.

Because the colliery can sell its coal substantially cheaper than gas, the heating bills of eight councils will fall by up to 25 per cent over the next two years. Just over 100 buildings will be supplied with Tower coal - a step towards increasing the colliery's sales to public service customers, many of whom switched to gas in the wake of

## Minister accuses bishops of degrading moral campaign

**Colin Brown**  
Chief Political Correspondent

A government minister yesterday accused five bishops of "degrading" the campaign for moral revival by Frances Lawrence, the widow of the murdered London headmaster Philip Lawrence.

Ann Widdecombe, a Home Office minister who was made a privy counsellor in the New Year Honours, angrily responded to the claims by the five Church of England bishops that the Government had failed to give a moral lead.

Ms Widdecombe attacked the bishops after New Year's messages in which they criticised Thatcherism for encouraging individualism at the expense of community spirit. She said: "I don't believe Frances Lawrence

would want her important message degraded in that way."

"The fact is that Tony Blair offers more unemployment with his policy of joining the Social Chapter and what do the bishops have to say about that?"

"Responsibility on the part of the individual is not just discharged by paying over more taxes to the state."

It sounds to me as if the bishops should be encouraging people to vote Conservative if they are really concerned about personal responsibility."

Ms Widdecombe, who converted to Roman Catholicism from the Church of England after it introduced the ordination of women, added: "I am not at all surprised at this... it is the latest in a series of party political pronouncements from the Church of England."

Another right-winger, the Conservative MP and former Minister Ray Whiting accused the bishops of "bias and want of logic". The Bishop of Oxford, rightly calls for a renewal of personal responsibility yet condemns the Conservative emphasis on personal morality.

He seeks to justify this paradox by alleging that the Government "wishes to resist fundamental economic and political changes that threaten the privileged position of its supporters."

"He does not specify the changes he has in mind but no doubt higher taxes and increased public control of the economy would feature prominently. These were precisely the policies which impoverished Britain in the Sixties and Seventies."

The Bishop of Oxford, the

Right Rev Richard Harris, one of the most outspoken bishops, appeared to offer Tony Blair an endorsement for guiding the Labour Party back to its moral roots. He said it offered the likelihood of a government which would emphasise "changing the conditions which depress and degrade the lives of so many of our fellow citizens".

Bishop Harris echoed Mrs Lawrence by saying people wanted a renewal of personal responsibility and a quest for decency after being "sickened by so much of what is going on in our society". The Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, said there was a national fatalism which was sapping the will to tackle mass unemployment and "humiliating low pay".

Leading article, page 11

## significant shorts

### Police hold man over murder

A man was due to be questioned last night about the murder of a 90-year-old man found strangled, beaten and bound in his home.

The 25-year-old from the New Brancepeth area of Co Durham was arrested on New Year's Eve by detectives bunting the killer of Wilf Mann, a retired cobbler.

His body was discovered after a neighbour and a council care worker went to investigate after hearing a noise just before 9.30am on Tuesday. They saw a man leave the back door, run through the garden and leave by the gate.

The man was wearing a distinctive turquoise-coloured hip length jacket and a grey trilby hat.

### Armada sails against drugs

Skippers of small boats are being targeted by customs and police officers to spy against drug traffickers.

Yacht and motor boat owners at the London Boat show, which started yesterday, were being urged to be on the look-out for possible unauthorised landings by foreign vessels, boats out of normal shipping lanes, ships signalling ashore or being met by small craft, vessels operating at night without lights, and unusual aircraft movements.

### Driven to distraction

A couple are seeking compensation after their stolen car was recovered and then stolen again while it was stored in a police compound awaiting fingerprint checks.

The Ford Orion belonging to Diane and Paul Edwards, both 26, of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, eventually turned up two days later severely damaged.

### Boy, 14, dies in stolen car

A boy, 14, died yesterday after the stolen car he was travelling in crashed while being chased by police. John Gough, of Wolverhampton, died after the crash in Walsall, West Midlands, police said.

A 19-year-old Wolverhampton man also travelling in the stolen Vauxhall Astras was injured.

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### Hospital beats flu crisis

A hospital which appealed

for emergency staff after more than 20 nurses were hit by flu yesterday has had

received an "excellent" response.

The Joyce Green Hospital in Dartford, Kent, was back to full staff after the appeal on local radio.

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# The joy of reading leaves men on the shelf

Marianne Macdonald  
and Michael Streete

When it comes to reading habits, women are chapters ahead of men, a survey reveals today.

The study of what Britons read – and when – found that 35 per cent of men had not read a book for pleasure for five years or more, compared to only one in five women.

The Book Marketing Ltd survey also reveals that while 47 per cent of women claimed to have finished a book in the previous fortnight, only 30 per

cent of men could say the same.

Reading habits differ markedly with age, according to the survey, reported in the latest issue of *Cultural Trends*, from the Policy Studies Institute. While only 18 per cent of those aged 15 to 24 had read a book in the week before they were questioned, the figure for people aged between 25 and 34 was 21 per cent, and 41 per cent for those over 55.

Cookery books, with Delia Smith's many titles such as *Winter Collection* and other books linked to television series

to the fore, are the most popular type of book bought, although romantic fiction and puzzle books have the biggest volume of sales.

In 1995, for example, culinary titles were bought by 21 per cent of those who purchased a book compared to 18 per cent who bought a crime story or thriller, 12 per cent who bought a romantic novel and 7 per cent who bought a work of 20th-century fiction.

A quick look around London book stores yesterday bore out some of the findings, with a range of cooking books, romantic works and thrillers among the most popular.

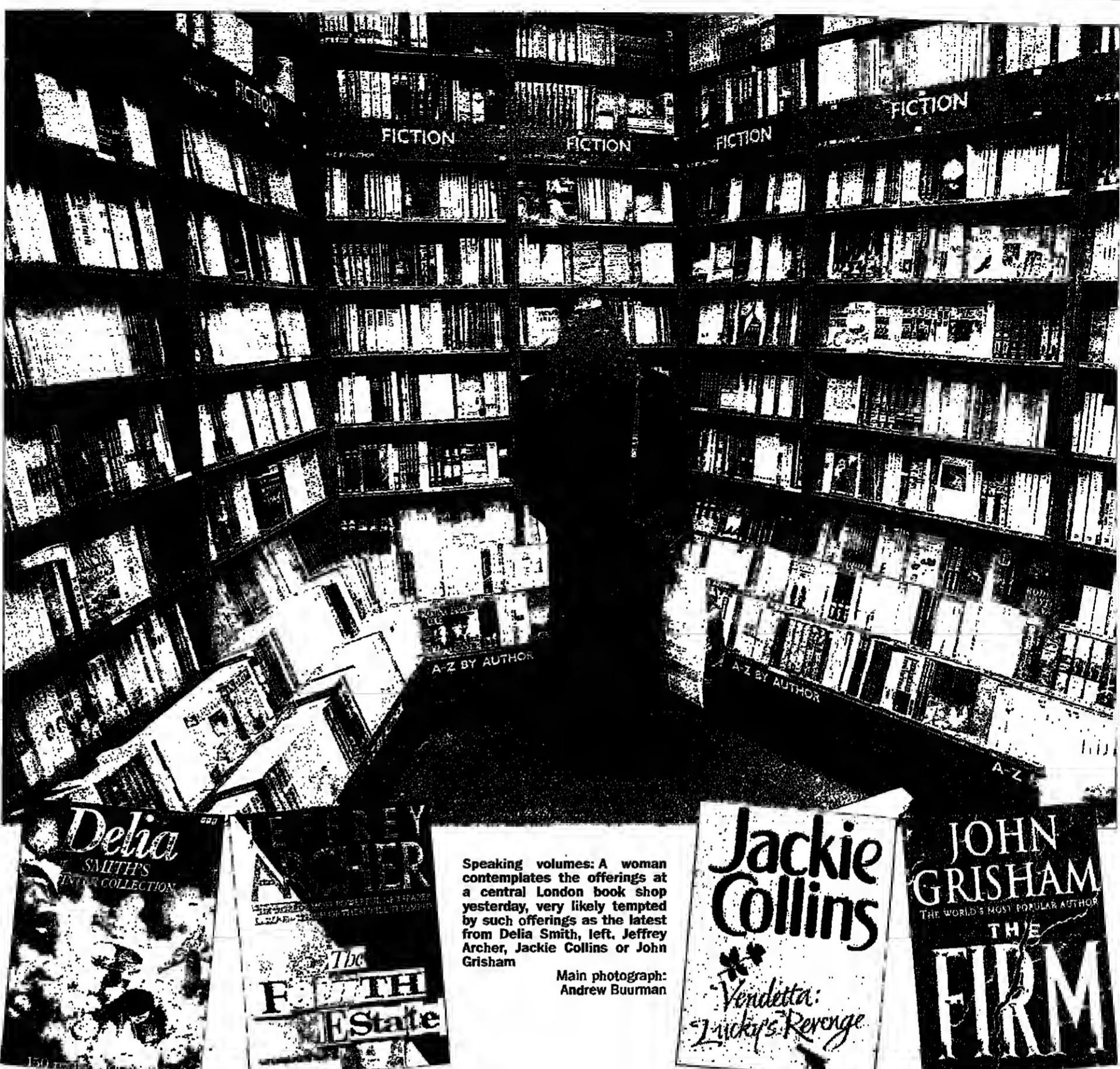
Among those most prominently displayed were the Jeffrey Archer blockbuster, *The Fourth Estate*, Jackie Collins's *Vendetta: Lucky's Revenge*, Dick Francis's latest best-seller *Come to Grief* and an array of titles by the horror writer Stephen King and the thriller expert John Grisham.

However, there was good news for those who prefer more high-brow reads. Richard Green, manager of Dillon's book store in Trafalgar Square, said that unlike some earlier Booker Prize winners, Graham Swift's *Last Orders* had been doing well. "It is a readable book and sold very well at Christmas," he said.

Also selling well are "trophy" books such as Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*; titles which look good on the bookcase but which tend to be more purchased than read.

The finding that women are greater readers than men was supported by a quick survey of book buyers by *The Independent*.

"I think it's because women are continually trying to change and improve themselves, and are more flexible and open to new experiences," Liz Kay, a curator at the Tate Gallery, said.



**Speaking volumes:** A woman contemplates the offerings at a central London book shop yesterday, very likely tempted by such offerings as the latest from Delia Smith, left, Jeffrey Archer, Jackie Collins or John Grisham

Main photograph:  
Andrew Buerman

A trophy: Dawkins's work may be for the bookcase

is getting harder to be well-read. The number of books published has risen steadily since 1987. Then, just under 55,000 were published, compared to just over 95,000 in 1995.

Book prices have risen from an average of £7.93 for a novel in the first half of 1991 to £8.99 in the second half of

1995. Consumer spending on books has jumped, from £755m in 1985 to £1,673m in 1994.

More than half the population – 55 per cent – use libraries to borrow books, while a further 15 per cent make use of their other services, such as their music libraries, computers, reference books, or newspapers.

But book stock in libraries is declining; in 1987 there were 2.4 books per head of population in England and Wales, compared with 2.18 in 1994. Expenditure by the Department of National Heritage on libraries was cut by 13.5 per cent between 1992 and 1993.

The survey found that al-

though nearly 30 per cent of households had a computer, only 7 per cent of the population had a multi-media capacity necessary to run CD-ROMs, the computer rival to books.

Of those that did, 69 per cent used it for work and 50 per cent for game-playing, but only 24 per cent used CD-ROMs for reference and 22 per cent for education. "New media are still no match for the book and new technology has not yet made any impact on people's reading habits," Rachel Dunlop, PSI research fellow, said. But she said the picture might change as books became more expensive and CD-ROMs cheaper.

## New crackdown on shops that sell aphrodisiac drug

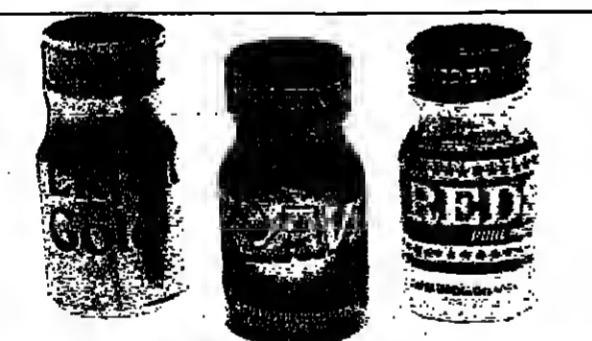
Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

The widely available aphrodisiac drug known as poppers faces a nationwide ban following a successful court case and new clampdown by officials.

Shopkeepers can now be prosecuted for selling poppers – which are particularly popular with gay men – and the Department of Health is considering tightening the restrictions on their availability.

This follows a campaign by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) which argues that the chemical in poppers can kill and may be linked to a type of cancer that people with HIV sometimes develop.

The drug, which costs about £4 for a small bottle contains the chemicals amyl, butyl or isobutyl nitrite. The side effects of inhaling it include a euphoric rush, enhanced orgasm, and the relaxation of the bowel muscles. Poppers are avail-



Spoil for choice: The drug is marketed in various guises

able from sex shops as well as via mail order.

In June, the RPS made an important, and at the time unnoticed, breakthrough when it prosecuted a sex shop in Camden, north London, under the Medicines Act, the RPS believes the ruling effectively means that all poppers are outlawed.

Since then the society has been working with police forces and local authorities throughout Britain, including London, Blackpool and Edinburgh, in an

attempt to stamp out the sale of poppers.

They have visited a number of sex shops and threatened to prosecute them if they continue to sell the drug.

Steve Lutener, the head of the Inspectorate and Enforcement Division of the RPS, said: "The prosecution is an important test case."

"We are now trying to educate people about the dangers and are dealing with complaints from the public."

"We have been visiting and sending letters to shops saying if they don't stop selling poppers we will take them to court."

He said that at least one person had died from the effects of the chemicals, which prevented the blood from carrying oxygen.

And he added that poppers may also be linked to the development of one of the early stages of full-blown Aids, the skin cancer Kaposi's sarcoma. As well as gay men, the drug is

also taken by teenagers. A survey of 752 pupils at schools in 1992 in Greater Manchester and Merseyside found that 23 per cent had taken poppers by the age of 16.

Meanwhile, the Medicines Control Agency, a Department of Health enforcement team, is investigating the manufacture and importation of the drug.

A Department of Health

spokeswoman said: "We are looking at how we can enforce the law more stringently."

"One of the reasons that shops still sell it is that our enforcement team is very small

and often if supplies are seized they are replaced in a few days."

She added that the agency only acted in response to complaints from the public.



Photographs: David Rose

Barclayloan

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news

THURSDAY 2 JANUARY 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

# Labour at odds over power to make policy.

**Colin Brown**  
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour front bench spokesmen last night said there would be a return to the "turmoil of the 1980s" if the Labour leadership endorsed reforms which could effect abolish constituency parties and cut the party's union links.

Centre-left Tribune MPs are planning to put forward al-

ternative reforms which would reduce the number of seats for Tony Blair's key Cabinet ministers for a review of the party's machinery in government under Tom Sawyer, the general secretary of the party.

The source said the LCC's plans disclosed yesterday in *The Independent* were "highly centralised and elitist". "What the inside-Left is arguing for, which is completely different to the LCC, is that there should be a

positive partnership between the leadership and its grass roots supporters. There should be participatory democracy within the party rather than plebiscite," the source added. "The LCC's agenda whereby local parties are effectively abolished would mean local party members would become appendages of the national leadership."

"That cannot work and would lead to the same prob-

lems we had in the 1970s and the turmoil of the 1980s. What we need is a relationship of trust with the leadership where individual party members can be positively involved."

Derek Patchett and Peter Hain, two Labour front bench spokesmen, will publish alternative plans under the left-wing *Tribune* newspaper. They will propose keeping union involvement at all levels of the

party, and keeping the party conference as a policy-making forum. The left wing want to give more influence to the policy forums, which already exist, to deliver policy changes.

Constituencies would still send delegates to the conference, and they would retain voting powers. The NEC would remain

the policy-making body between conferences, with a final decision over the manifesto, but the left want to reduce the number of seats for sitting members of the Cabinet on the NEC.

The LCC is proposing that the NEC should no longer make policy. Unions and other affiliated groups would lose their direct links in the constituencies. General management committees, which at present send resolutions and delegates to the annual conference, would be replaced by a small executive, and grass roots decisions would be taken by one-member-one-vote ballots.

River slowly winds its way back to life

**Stephen Goodwin**  
Heritage Correspondent

Richard Morris is hoping for a re-run of the fabled winter of 1947, though it is not so much the several feet of snow he wants as the floods that would inevitably follow.

The melt water would be the ideal natural ally in the restoration of a 1.5-mile stretch of the River Cole, a tributary of the Thames on the Oxfordshire-Wiltshire border.

Transformation of the river, on the National Trust's Coleshill estate, is already well underway. It is barely recognisable from the "dreary trickle" in the bottom of a drainage ditch familiar to Mr Morris, the estate land agent.

At a cost of £250,000, shared by the European Union and the Environment Agency, the Cole has been re-engineered, introducing meanders and loops, shallows, undercut banks and gravel riffles. The aim is to restore the river to a natural winding course destroyed by canalisation in the 1970s.

Flooding will be allowed on adjacent fields to provide the wet ground necessary for feeding waders such as curlew and redshank. A five-acre rare meadow where knapweed and purple-flowered snake's head fritillary still grow will be extended over 20 acres of former arable land.

Elsewhere on the 100 acres of flood plain, silage fields will be managed without fertilisers and the grass



Free flowing: Conservation work on the river Cole has revived its meanders and helped re-establish water plants and wildlife

Photograph: David Rose

cut later in the summer to allow birds to nest successfully.

"It's been a long haul since the planning stage but now it is starting to look superb," Mr Morris said.

"The meanders are back in the river, young willows and water plants are getting established, we have

seen the first snipe for a long time and there seem to be more kingfishers. People who walk here in the spring will see the last scars of the construction, but they will also see dace and chub holding themselves in the current. And you can hear the river flowing over the gravel rather

than it sulking in the bottom of a ditch."

A further £100,000, from the same sources, will go towards an extensive scientific monitoring programme by Pond Action of Oxford Brookes University.

The Cole is one of two schemes

covered by the River Restoration Project. English Nature and the Countryside Commission are among the partners. The other scheme is an urban site on the River Skerne, near Darlington.

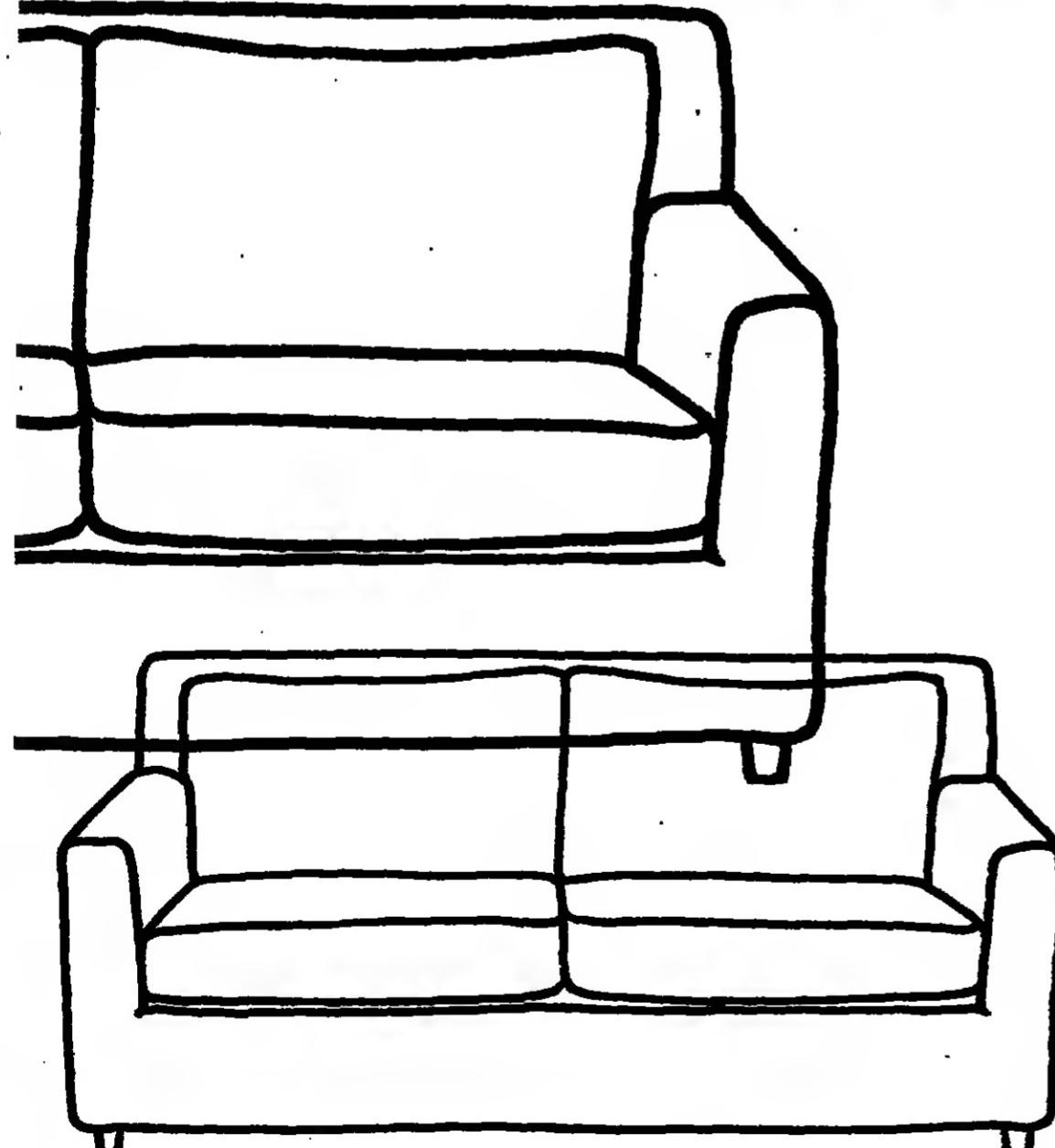
Ninety-five per cent of the country's rivers have had their flows,

wildlife and vegetation altered by drainage, agriculture and the taming hand of man. The Cole is known as a "flashy" river because of the sudden rushes of rainwater off the tarmac and concrete of the Swindon area.

Mr Morris hopes careful moni-

toring will demonstrate that rivers and their settings can be restored and plants and wildlife re-established. It will be decades before the hay meadows are back to their full flower-rich glory but it may not be long before the other is back beneath the willows of Coleshill.

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## Ireland jails farmers using illegal growth promoters

**Alan Murdoch**  
Dublin

Rogue Irish farmers who go for a quick buck by feeding illegal growth promoters to cattle are being hammered with jail terms under a tough drive by Dublin to protect lucrative beef exports hard hit by BSE scares.

Four farmers and a vet are facing jail and more than 100 other cases are due before the courts in the crackdown. One judge told one farmer he was "worse than a terrorist" while another likened a vet who admitted keeping illegal growth promoters to a drug dealer.

More cases are under investigation by teams of Department of Agriculture inspectors as Ireland seeks to defend its image as a producer of quality, grass-fed beef.

The prosecutions, delayed temporarily by a legal challenge brought by a meat company executive, are coming before courts across the country. Besides those jailed, others have received heavy fines.

Clenbuterol has been used for years by farmers in feedstuffs, often diluted in milk powder, to achieve higher earnings by raising the proportion of lean meat to fat in beef cattle.

First developed as a remedy for respiratory problems in horses, the drug can induce fatal heart attacks in humans if inhaled in concentrated form.

The harsh penalties appear to be working as a deterrent. Investigators say detected abuse on Ireland's 170,000 farms has fallen amid the publicity about recent court verdicts. Farmers caught using illegal drugs are

also having EU bovine headage payments blocked.

The tough measures are being applied as Ireland seeks to recover from the damage to its huge meat trade inflicted by consumer alarm over the BSE.

Ireland exports 87 per cent of its 1.7bn beef output and is more dependent on the sector than any other European Union state. Dublin already faces a big bill for the border policing operation to prevent BSE-infected animals crossing the border from Northern Ireland. Under "Operation Matador" hundreds of extra gardai are operating border check-points to block illegal cattle movements.

Although infection levels are tiny by British standards, the 66 BSE cases detected this year in the Irish Republic compare with only 16 in 1995. Several farmers in the south Munster region are being investigated amid suspicion that they deliberately introduced BSE-infected animals in order to claim market-value compensation for their entire herds.

To restore consumer confidence, Dublin has introduced a computerised cattle-tracing system which registers the movement of every beef animal in the 7-million-strong national herd.

This and re-introduction of EU intervention purchasing to assist farmers while demand for beef declines will cost Dublin an extra £80m next year, according to official estimates.

A Food Safety Board with legal powers was recently created by the Department of Health, while Agriculture minister Ivan Yates has allocated £1.5m for research into BSE.

## Biographer to reveal secrets of West brother's role in killings

More sensational revelations are to be published about the secret life of John West, the "gentle giant" brother of the serial killer Fred West, it emerged yesterday.

They will be in a new final chapter of *An Evil Love*, Geoffrey Wansell's official biography of Fred West, a self-confessed murderer, which will be published in paperback in the spring. John West, a retired dustman, hanged himself in the garage of his Gloucester home on 28 November, the day before the jury at Bristol Crown Court was to be sent out to consider allegations that he raped his niece Anne Marie West about 300 times over several years at the family's Gloucester home.

It was a suicide which mirrored that of his brother. Fred West hanged himself in his remand cell at Birmingham Prison on New Year's Day 1995, while awaiting trial on 12 charges of murder.

The new chapter in the paperback edition of the Fred West biography will disclose new details of the brothers'

close relationship and of John's relationship with Fred's wife, the jailed serial killer Rosemary West. Mr Wansell has already said in the hardback edition of Fred West's life how the builder claimed that John was involved "a lot" in the kidnappings and killings which took place at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester.

Fred West also claimed that it was his brother John and his

first wife, Rena Costello, who killed his lover and family nanny Ann McFall, 18, and that for some years his second wife, Rosemary - now serving life for 10 murders - and his brother had a sexual relationship.

At his trial John West denied a specimen rape charge involving Anne Marie West, and another single rape charge concerning a girl who cannot be named for legal reasons. It emerged during the trial that John West had admitted having sex with Rosemary West on several occasions.

Mr Wansell was commissioned to write the biography of Fred West for the Official Solicitor. The bulk of the royalties will go to Fred West's estate for the benefit of the younger children of his family.

The author was given unprecedented access to personal belongings, documentary and video material concerning the prosecution of Fred West. He also attended John West's rape trial. But the process prevented him from making disclosures concerning John West while he was unconvicted and alive.

Mr Wansell yesterday declined to give details of his revelations concerning John West in the final 12,000-word chapter of the revised paperback biography. But he revealed the extent that John West knew about his brother's activities over the past years and how much of a partnership he shared with his brother.



John West (left) and his brother's biographer Geoffrey Wansell

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Making up: Juliana Braithwaite, a volunteer at Keyworth primary in Southwark, south London, preparing a pupil for Grease

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## How the best of British youth could change the face of our public services

**Louise Jury**

Many schools, hospitals and communities could be transformed this year by a rapid expansion in the numbers of young people voluntarily giving their time to help them.

The Conservatives have pledged that by the end of 1997, everyone between the ages of 15 and 25 who wants to volunteer should be able to. Last month, the Government gave £3m to fund local "volunteer facilitators".

Even if they lose the election, the initiative will continue as Labour has announced plans to have 100,000 young people involved in "citizens' service" by the millennium. The Liberal Democrats gave their backing to the idea some time ago.

Elizabeth Hoodless, executive director of the charity Community Service Volunteers, said yesterday that volunteering was an idea whose time has come.

To show how the politicians' pledges can be put into practice, the charity has just completed the first 12 months of pilot projects.

In Cardiff, Sunderland and the London borough of Southwark, around 150 young people have been helping in schools, restoring gardens and calming waiting-room nerves in hospitals.

Mrs Hoodless said: "What has been remarkable in the projects is the joy with which professionals have welcomed young people to help raise reading levels, or calm waiting areas in hospitals or care for people with learning difficulties."

A problem with volunteers in the past was a reputation for unreliability, but good organisation had overcome that. "I think we've made a real breakthrough," she said.

At Keyworth primary school in Southwark, south London, Juliana Braithwaite applied mascara to the eyes of Emily Tome, 10, as her classmates

babbled excitedly, preparing to perform the musical *Grease*.

Ms Braithwaite, 25, has just been taken on to work 10 hours a week at the school after proving a dedicated volunteer with the Southwark pilot project. She is still giving her own time in the afternoons while she waits to take a bachelor of education course next September.

"I've always been interested in teaching and thought it would be a good idea to get to know a bit more about the needs of young children. It's helped me to decide if this is the sort of career I really want to go into."

She believed many young people could benefit, but not if the idea becomes just another government scheme. "This should be seen as a valuable thing," she said.

Christina Albrecht, the head teacher, agreed. "It makes tons of difference to the school. It enables all the extra bits to happen. We managed before but we couldn't go as much. We've had more trips in this last term than in all the 10 years I've been here."

One of the teachers, Andrea Inniss, said she could see literacy levels rising in her classroom as the children received more attention. Her colleague Kim Hindocha teaches one child who had never used the past tense because it was not used at home. He is beginning to now. "A volunteer can make gentle reminders in a way that as a teacher with 30 children you cannot," she said.

Similar success stories are claimed for the projects in Cardiff and Sunderland which were developed to show how citizens' service could be organised, ensuring a prototype is in place for expansion, whoever wins the election.

Elizabeth Hoodless said: "What we're talking about is young people as a matter of choice giving a period of service to the communities they live in which is good for them and good for the community."

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Snap: Cameras hidden in a vanity case (right) and in binoculars will be auctioned by Christie's on 17 January. Photographs: Adrian Dennis

## Labour may scrap primary tables

**Lucy Ward**  
Education Correspondent

National primary school league tables could be scrapped in favour of local tables under a Labour government.

The shadow Education Secretary, David Blunkett, said yesterday that a final decision would be made after the first performance tables for 11-year-olds are published in March. But he is understood to be convinced parents would be better served by tables giving information on schools in their local area than by a mass of national data.

The first tables will provide information on the curriculum test results of more than 14,000 primary and middle schools in England.

The Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, yesterday claimed Labour had "let the cat out of the bag" over its views on schools' accountability. The party had made it clear it would deny parents wider information on primary school performance.

Mr Blunkett said Labour would review the Government's tables "to see whether they are the most efficient and helpful way of providing information to parents and lifting standards in primary schools".

He went on: "We would need to be persuaded by parents that information on how other schools many miles away are doing would be of value to them - or that the £2m it would cost could not be better spent helping their school in a more direct way." He was referring to the £1.8m estimated cost of producing the tables and Labour would want to examine whether this was a worthwhile use of resources.

As an alternative to national tables Labour would require education authorities to compile data on schools in their areas.

allowing parents to compare performances locally and against a national average.

Mr Blunkett also wants authorities to provide information for parents on how schools add value, comparing performance at the age of 11 with assessment of pupils on entry at five.

Labour have said it would retain secondary school league tables, introduced six years ago, though it wants more value-added information as well as public examination results.

Mr Blunkett's stance opens a clear policy rift with the Government, which says national comparisons are as important at primary as at secondary school level, and the key to raising standards.

The Government's primary tables will show the proportion of pupils in each school in England who reach national target standards in English, maths and science. They include teacher assessments of pupils as well as the results of tests taken by 600,000 11-year-olds last May.

Mrs Shephard provoked a boycott of the tests for 11-year-olds by teaching unions last year when she went back on a promise to delay publication of results until the tests had "bedded down". The move was widely seen as a concession to her party's right wing. She justified her U-turn by pointing to the poor results achieved in tests the previous year, when more than half of 11-year-olds failed to reach expected standards in maths and English.

The general election could disrupt preparations for publication which are already well under way. In the event of a poll before March, the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, and the education permanent secretary, Michael Bichard, would decide whether civil servants would stop work on the tables.

### DAILY POEM

H.

Ciaran Carson

The Powers-that-Be decreed that from the \_\_\_ of \_\_\_  
the sausage rolls, for reasons  
Of security, would be contracted to a different firm.  
They gave the prisoners no reasons.

The prisoners complained. We cannot reproduce his actual words here, since their spokesman is alleged  
To be a sub-commander of a movement deemed to be illegal.

An actor spoke for him in almost-perfect lip-synch:  
*"It's not the quality  
We're giving off about. Just that it seems they're  
getting smaller. We're talking quantity."*

His "Belfast" accent wasn't West enough. Is the H  
in H-Block aitch or haitch?  
Does it matter? What we have hold? Our day will come?  
Give or take an inch?

Well, give an inch and someone takes an effing mile.  
Everything is in the ways  
You say them. Like, the prison that we call Long Kesh

is to the Powers-that-Be. The Maze.

Today's selection from the TS Eliot Prize shortlist forms part of Ciaran Carson's "Letters of the Alphabet" sequence, in his book *Opera et Cetera* (Bloodaxe). Carson, who is Literature and Traditional Arts Officer with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, won the Prize in 1993 for his collection *First Language*.

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consisting of large, medium and small patches.

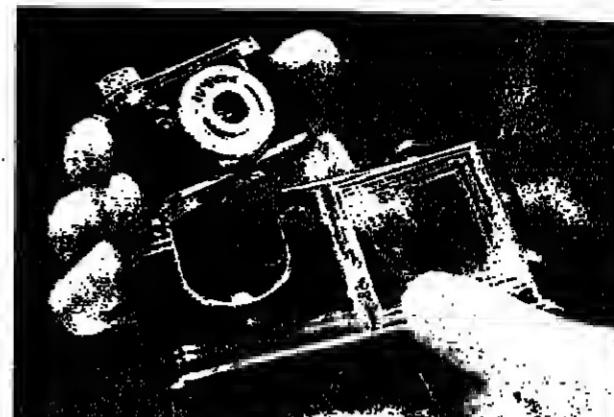
They feed your body's craving for nicotine, gradually reducing the amounts until you no longer need it.

Don't worry, tar in cigarettes

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Every day you wear a patch on your arm or body.

It's designed to deliver a lower dose of nicotine than you'd get



**Marianne Macdonald**  
Arts Correspondent

When James Bond casually produces an item from his mind-boggling array of gadgets, the inevitable assumption is that they owe more to the future than the past.

But an unusual auction sale later this month reveals that spy cameras, at least, have been around for more than a century and come in an extraordinary variety of secret guises.

The examples to go on sale at Christie's, South Kensington, in west London, were gathered by an anonymous French collector, whose quirk was to find as many examples as possible, dating from the Victorians, of the trend for concealed cameras.

These were designed for both men and women - erring husbands may well have been at the wrong end of their concealed lenses - and now command prices up to tens of thousands of pounds.

A popular type was the camera gun. Many of these models, which started in the 1850s, were unconvincing in terms of disguise - Christie's is offering an Eras gun camera consisting merely of a grip without the barrel - but they did have the advantage of reducing blurring.

One of the better varieties is included in the sale on 17 January: the Japanese Toko Kogaku, which offers a sight and

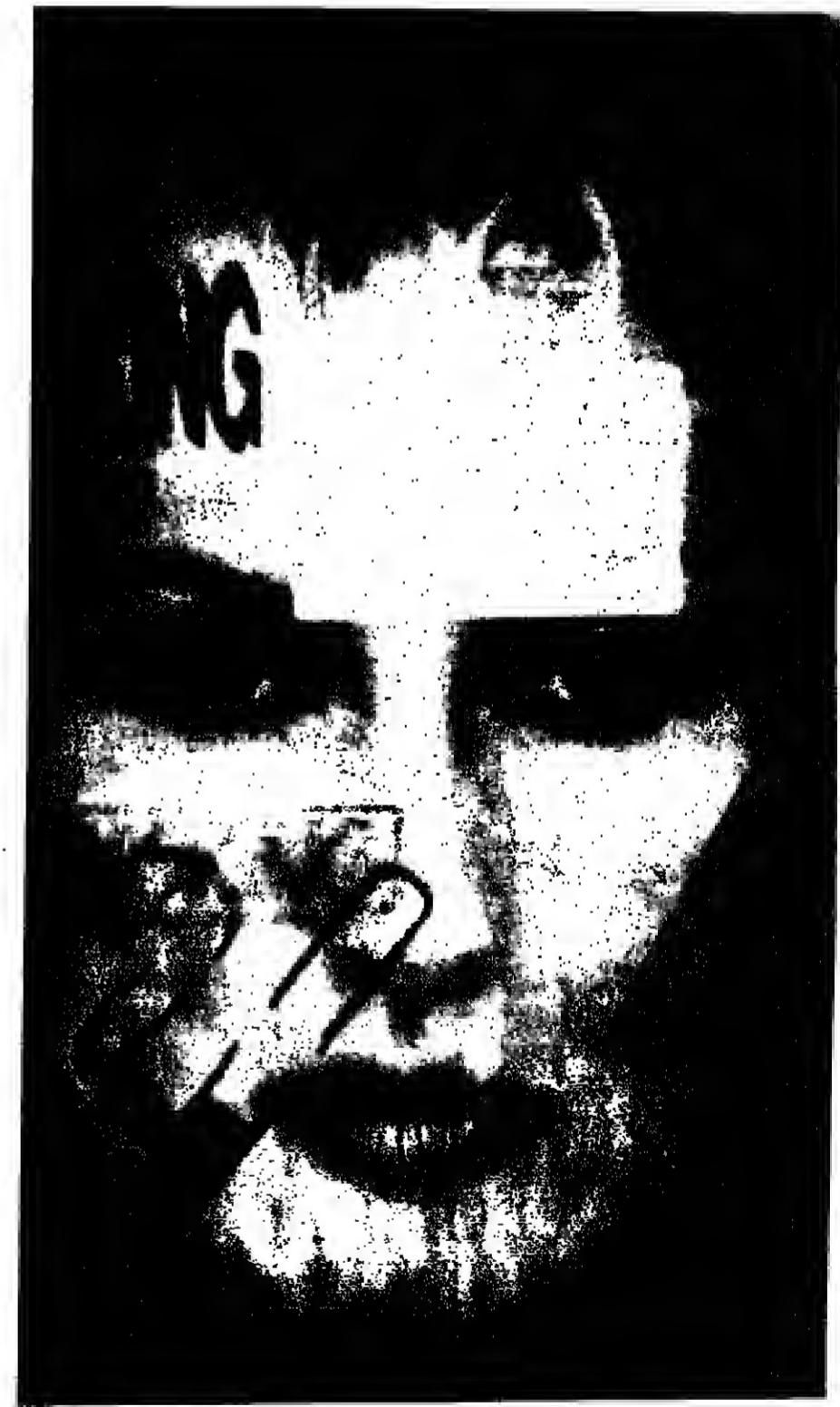
dummy magazine and is estimated at £100 to £600. If a gun seems a little crude, aspiring spies should consider the watch camera. Christie's is offering the Steinbeck ABC made in 1948 by Dr R Steinier, a prolific German inventor who was a notoriously bad businessman when it came to marketing his designs.

His Steinbeck ABC - estimated at up to £1,200 with its original box - is considered one of

the best of its kind although only the unobservant would have been fooled. A small lens pokes out where the XII should be, while a button at six o'clock activates the camera.

Women might prefer the photo-vanity set from Ansco Photo Products of Binghamton, New York. Estimated at up to £1,400, this black vanity case is fitted with a hidden camera, comb, mirror and make-up set. It takes snaps through a small opening under the carry-strap.

Other gadgets include the notebook camera complete with pen (up to £140), the cigarette box camera (four "brands" including Marlboro; up to £140), or the lighter camera, with its Zippo-style case (up to £150). Last but not least is Bloch's remarkably unconvincing 1890 photo-cravat camera, the size of a spectacle case. Designed to fit inside a cravat with its lens poking from the position usually taken by the pin, this will command the highest price of all, likely to be as much as £18,000.



from a cigarette, but higher than the point where physical cravings are too much to bear. Furthermore, unlike some patches, ours last a full 24 hours.

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## international

# Chirac honours Johnny and forgives France

**Mary Dejevsky**  
Paris

President Jacques Chirac may have no pressing need to court the voters – parliamentary elections are more than a year away and his own job is safe for five years – but the message of his New Year address to the nation and his New Year's honour list could have come from the same school of seasonal PR as John Major's. Tell the punters what they want to hear, the adviser seems to have been, and give them plenty of what we know they like.

The result in Mr Chirac's case was some extravagant stroking of the Frenchman's delicate ego and a coagulation of new and promoted members of the Legion d'Honneur littered with household names of a certain age.

Heading yesterday's news was the latest honour for Johnny Hallyday, the superannuated French-language rock star (almost the only one). There, too, was Sacha Distel (remember him?), the gracefully growing-old balladist of yesteryear, and the veteran fashion designer Pierre Cardin

– one of those whose couture house has so far escaped the clutches of the *enfants terribles* from London.

There was a sprinkling of "achieving" women – France's first woman in space, Claude André-Deshays, and the recently appointed female head of France's equivalent of the CIA, Martine Monteil, among them – but there were also yards of establishment names, headed by one familiar from the distant past, the former prime minister, Maurice Couve de Murville.

For his 11-minute address on New Year's eve Mr Chirac was looking, somehow, especially Gallic. He was suddenly one of "us", the French, rather than one of "them", those light-suited "Anglo-Saxons" whose easy, laid-back ways he often imitates on much of government policy.

After a storm of criticism from the pundits about his attitude – "as though he was a spectator of his own government", said one – Mr Chirac had decided that his fellow-countrymen were doing pretty well. "France is changing, France is modernising itself, the French are mobilising," he insisted. "Beyond the conservatism ... that exists here and there, I see evidence of dynamism and vitality."

He had even decided that they were all in this together, "advancing together on the path of our joint ambitions". One of France's senior political commentators described the message as "basically a correction of his last broadcast". The French and their president, it seems, go into 1997 all square.

Taking the plunge: Giuseppe Palmulli keeping up a 50-year tradition by diving into the Tiber River in Rome yesterday. He and two others jumped off the Cavour Bridge after first sprinkling wine into the river

Photograph: Paolo Cocco/Reuters

## America acts to safeguard its national parks

**David Usborne**  
New York

The new year is promising to bring some respite to America's chronically overused national park system with sharp increases in visitor entrance fees and the promise of other measures to curb human intrusion – particularly of the mechanised kind in cars and aircraft.

Bruce Babbitt, the US Secretary of the Interior, marked the start of 1997 by announcing stricter limits on aircraft overflying the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Under the new rules, aeroplane and helicopter tours will be outlawed in 80 per cent of the airspace over the canyon, compared with 40 per cent previously. In the summer months, all flying will be barred before 8 am and after 6 pm.

The new controls are designed, however, as only the first phase in a longer-term plan to reverse the encroachments of all private vehicles in the canyon and other popular parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite. At the canyon, for example, proposals already approved will eventually force visitors to leave their cars outside the park and take shuttle buses to points inside.

"At peak periods of summer overflights, the south rim of the Grand Canyon is noisier than Times Square on New Year's Eve," Mr Babbitt said as he announced the flight limits. Underlining the dawn and dusk

plane curfews, he added: "These are the truly magical hours in the Grand Canyon".

The entire park system, meanwhile, should be considerably tormented by the increase in entrance fees approved by the US Congress last year. Due to take effect this month, the changes will mean for instance a doubling from \$10 to \$20 of the entrance charge for one car into the canyon this summer.

The rates change will especially benefit the largest parks which have been trying to reconcile falling federal contributions with rapidly rising visitor volumes. Yellowstone drew international attention to the issue last summer when it closed down some of its areas to tourists, pleading penury.

By addressing motorised traffic, meanwhile, the government is getting into the central dilemma of the park system's management: at what point does the need to protect America's wonders become more important than the principle of keeping them accessible to all?

The plan gradually to expel private cars from the Grand Canyon will be put into motion this year and phased in over 15 years. If all goes well, from 2012 no more will be allowed entry.

In some ways this says 'no more, we are not going to remain slaves to the automobile', as we have been," Ron Amberger, the Superintendent of the Grand Canyon, said.

## Pope puts faith in millennium

**Andrew Gumbel**  
Rome

The Pope inaugurated the new year yesterday with a message of forgiveness and peace, urging the world to put past conflicts behind it and look forward instead in the jubilee celebrations that the Catholic Church is organising for the millennium.

John Paul's traditional greeting, delivered from the balcony of his private apartments in the Vatican, reflected many of his own personal concerns, as he looks back on a long life and searches for the physical strength to survive until 2000.

The Pope sees the millennium as an opportunity to re-evangelise the world and has urged the opening of purses for a programme of church-building, particularly in Rome.

First indications suggest that the jubilee celebrations in Rome will be much more about cashing in on tourism and the construction industry than any spiritual revival. The Pope, however, remains unbowed. In a New Year's Eve service in the Roman Jesuit church of Sant'Ignazio, the Pope said he had "special reason" to give thanks for the past year and the preparations under way for 2000.

The big question is whether he can survive. This most resolute and physically resilient of popes has been diagnosed with a form of Parkinson's disease and has a history of severe abdominal problems.

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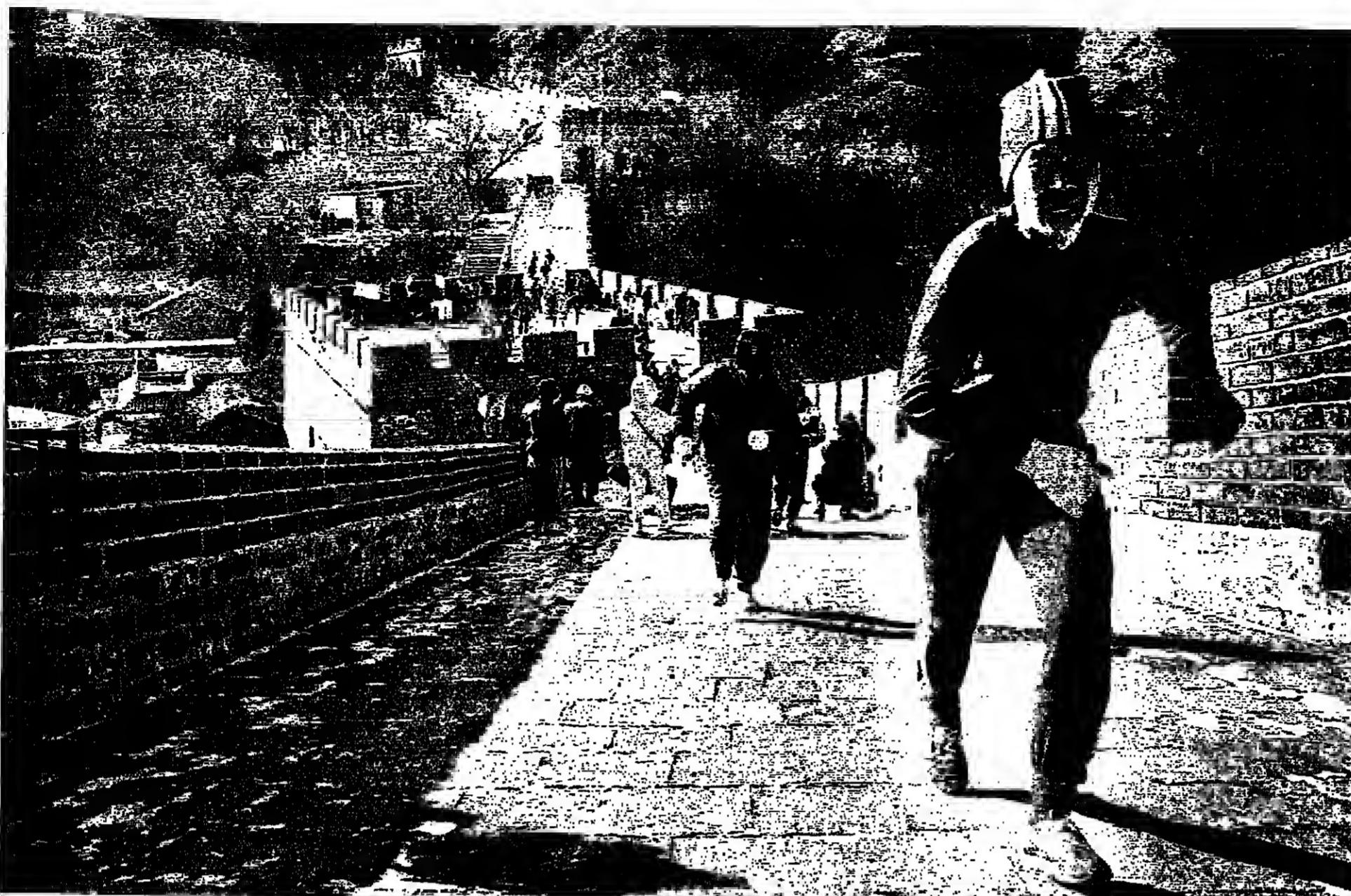
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## international

## significant shorts



Competitors in the second annual Great Wall races at Badaling, near Peking, battling strong head winds and a temperature of minus 25C yesterday. About 2,000 people had signed up for races over various distances, but most were kept away by the bad weather. The oldest of those who ran was 82 and the youngest was 5. Photograph: AP

### Iran orders out 1 million foreign workers

Iran has ordered employers to fire an estimated one million foreign workers, mostly Afghan refugees, by Saturday, saying most of them were illegal aliens. A Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs official, quoted by the daily *Hanshahri*, said employers of foreign workers must replace them with Iranian employees by 4 January.

Iran, which suffers from an official unemployment rate of nearly 11 per cent, is home to two million refugees, 1.4 million from Afghanistan and 600,000 from Iraq. This makes the country of more than 60 million people the world's most important host country, according to the United Nations refugee agency.

*AP - Lima*

*Reuter - Tehran*

*AP - Kabul*

An aeroplane dropped several bombs on Kabul last night in the sixth such air raid in five days. The night sky was lit up with tracer fire as anti-aircraft gunners of the Islamic Taliban, who took the Afghan capital in September, tried to bring the attacking aircraft down.

There has been a spate of air-raids since Saturday when opposition planes launched four attacks in one day. The air raids began the day after opposition forces suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the Taliban.

*Reuter - Kabul*

*AP - Kansas City*

*AP - Sydney*

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## international

# Ten seconds that shook the Middle East



Close to catastrophe: An off-duty soldier, Noam Friedman (left), opens fire on Palestinian shoppers in Hebron, before an Israeli soldier, Avi Buskila (centre), jumps on him and drags him from the scene

Photographs: AP/Reuter

## Gunman aimed to sabotage handover

**Associated Press and Reuter**

Palestinians dived to the ground in panic and shouted "massacre" when an Israeli soldier opened fire in all directions at the vegetable market in the heart of Hebron. The off-duty soldier, who lives in a Jewish settlement near Jerusalem, emptied the clip of his M-16 automatic rifle into the crowded open-air market before other soldiers overpowered him.

Noam Friedman, 19, fired for nearly 10 seconds into the market on Martyrs Street, wounding men, women and a youth, witnesses and doctors said.

At first, panic and confusion gripped everyone - Arabs, soldiers and Jewish settlers. The Jews thought they were under attack and began firing around the market. Police and soldiers rushed to the scene from the nearby Jewish enclave of Avraham Avinu, and witnesses said at least one Palestinian was wounded by them.

However, as it dawned on the Israelis that they were not the target, soldiers crept towards the gunman. A few Palestinians also moved towards him in an attempt to bring him down.

Israeli lieutenant Avi Buskila got there first. "When he entered the area of the square and began shooting, I stood at my post and heard the shots. Within 10 seconds I pinned him to the ground and took his gun," Lt Buskila said.

Even while on the ground the gunman tried to load a second magazine into his rifle. Soldiers then dragged him to a mil-

itary jeep. "It happened right in front of me," said stallholder Walid Kafsheh, 46. "I tried to stop him but the soldiers got to him first. Then soldiers and police came from everywhere shooting."

Abdel Karim Atash, 16, was selling subergines when he was hit by gunfire. "I turned and saw a soldier in uniform. I tried to run but felt a pain in my leg." Friedman fired between 10 and 15 rounds, witnesses said.

The director of Hebron's Alia Hospital initially said 11 Palestinians were wounded, but hospital officials later said that five people were hit by bullets, and nine others were hurt in beatings by Israeli troops.

The 19-year-old off-duty soldier was from the Maaleh Adumim settlement near Jerusalem. He was drafted five months ago and served in a logistics unit in Israel. He was not assigned to duty in Hebron. A senior Israeli army commander said Friedman did guard duty on Tuesday night at his base near Jerusalem, and got on a bus to Hebron yesterday morning. The gunman wore a skullcap and a white fringed undershirt, both symbols of a religious Jew.

Later, Friedman was defiant.

He said he acted to sabotage the handover to the PLO of the town that he said was bought for the Jews 4,000 years ago by the biblical Abraham. "Abraham bought the Cave of the Patriarchs for 400 shekels of silver. No one will return it," said Friedman, triumphantly waving his fist in the air.

The cave, which is holy to Jews, is to remain under Israeli control along with all Jewish holy places after Israel withdraws from 80 per cent of Hebron. The cave is also a holy site to Muslims, who call it the Haram al-Ibrahimi. In February 1994, Baruch Goldstein, a Jew from the nearby Kiryat Arba settlement, massacred 29 Palestinians kneeling in prayer at al-

Ibrahimi mosque before survivors beat him to death.

Friedman's defiance brought to mind another right-wing religious Israeli, Yigal Amir, who murdered Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin four months ago to halt a land-for-peace deal with Arafat.

"Bibi [Netanyahu] remains alone, without Jews be-

hind him," Friedman said in remarks that echoed Amir.

Yesterday, the army poured troops into Hebron and put armoured personnel carriers on surrounding hills to prevent reprisals. It also imposed a brief curfew. Youths burned tyres and clashed with soldiers briefly after the shooting but

the streets quickly emptied.

Hebron's Palestinian political leaders issued a statement after the shooting saying there could be no peace while the 400 settlers remained among the 100,000 Palestinians. "The only solution for Hebron is to evacuate these fanatics," the statement read.



Israeli soldiers and medics treating one of the Palestinian victims of the marketplace shooting. Photograph: Reuter

## Arabs fear Israeli hold on Clinton's new team

**John Carlson**  
Washington

High among President Bill Clinton's New Year resolutions will be to do all in his power to forge a lasting peace settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. However, two recent appointments he has made to top jobs in his administration have only made the challenge more daunting.

Madeleine Albright, the President's designated Secretary of State, and Rahm Emanuel, who replaces George Stephanopoulos as senior White House adviser, will only encourage the perception of the Palestinians and the Arab world that America cannot be trusted to play honest broker in the Middle Eastern conflict.

Given the huge distrust that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu generates among Arabs, America's mediating role as negotiations evolve beyond the Hebron deal towards "final status" talks will become more critical than ever.

President Clinton will be seeking to press home the advantage of helping Israel rebuild bridges with its Arab neighbours, notably Egypt and Jordan. He would also like to add Syria to the peace equation. Syria, as Israel's all-important security concerns cannot be met with Syrian co-operation.

The prospects of Ms Albright faring any better than the outgoing Warren Christopher at persuading Syria to do business with Mr Netanyahu, are not good. It is not only a question of style, although temperamentally Ms Albright is to Mr Christopher as Lady Thatcher was to Sir Geoffrey Howe. More to the point, Ms Albright's record as US ambassador to the United Nations offered evidence once more of America's special relationship with Israel.

Mr Emanuel remains for now a relatively unknown quantity. But as his fame spreads, the news will also reach the Arab world that the middle name of President Clinton's new emmissary is Israel.

Rahm Emanuel's father fought with the Israeli underground in the war for Israeli nationhood. Mr Emanuel senior named his three sons after Israeli heroes who died in that war. The Emanuel family was brought up in Chicago but summer holidays were always spent in the Jewish homeland. Rahm Emanuel was born in the US but kept Israel dual citizenship until he was 18. During the Gulf

War he displayed his allegiance to the land of his father when he volunteered to serve in the Israeli army. He spent two-and-a-half weeks at a military base near the Lebanese border.

It was events at the Lebanese border eight months ago which revealed to Arab leaders the extent of Ms Albright's commitment to the Israeli cause. She argued vehemently against a UN decision to publish a human rights report heavily critical of the Israeli artillery bombardment of Qana, in southern Lebanon, which killed more than 100 Palestinian refugees. Ms Albright said publication of the report would damage American peace efforts.

Boutros Ghali was in an interview in November that colleagues at the UN had warned him at the time that his decision to overrule Ms Albright's request not to publish the report would cost him his job as UN Secretary-General.

In an article published in yesterday's *New York Times* Mr Boutros-Ghali, who bade his final farewell to the UN yesterday, said Ms Albright was

**Boutros-Ghali's decision to publish a report critical of Israel may have cost him his job**

well aware of the difficulties she would encounter in persuading the Arab world of her "bona fides".

Mr Boutros-Ghali was at a dinner two weeks ago attended by Ms Albright. It was a tense encounter, for only days earlier she had succeeded in her crusade to dash his hopes of a second term as Secretary-General. "What went wrong?" he asked her. "Why this campaign against me for six months?"

According to Mr Boutros-Ghali, she foisted him off an "official interpretation" and then proceeded to ask him for help in the new challenges she would face after her promotion to Secretary of State.

"She asked me to help her in relations with the Arabs," said Mr Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian veteran of Middle Eastern diplomacy. "She made the point that she knew because she was against my re-election that the Arab world was not happy."

## The diary of violence in one long year

**5 January:** Yahya Ayyash, known as "The Engineer" and believed to be the mastermind of a wave of Islamic suicide bombings against Israel, is killed in the Gaza Strip when his cellular telephone blows up. The militant Islamic group Hamas vows to avenge his death, which it blames on Israel.

**20 January:** Palestinians hold first election for president and parliament to rule in the West Bank and Gaza under peace deal with Israel. Yasser Arafat, PLO chief, elected president.

**25 February:** Two Hamas suicide bombers kill 26 in attacks

in Jerusalem and the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon. Bombings said to be in revenge for the killing of Ayyash.

**3 March:** Hamas suicide bomber on a bus in Jerusalem kills 18. Israel declares all-out war against Hamas.

**4 March:** A Hamas suicide bomber kills 13 at a busy Tel Aviv shopping mall.

**23 March:** Israel, rocked by the suicide bombings, puts off scheduled withdrawal from Hebron, the seventh and last West Bank town still occupied.

**29 May:** Benjamin Netanyahu, a right-winger, ousts Shimon

Peres in national elections vowing to boost security.

**23 July:** Arafat meets David Levy, Israeli Foreign Minister.

**2 August:** Netanyahu infuriates Palestinians by lifting four-year freeze on West Bank Jewish settlement expansion imposed by previous government.

**29 August:** Palestinians hold first general strike in West Bank and Gaza in two years to protest at Israeli policy; heads of Israeli-PLO steering committee on implementation of interim peace deal hold first meeting since Netanyahu took office.

**4 September:** Netanyahu and Arafat hold first summit.

**24 September:** Israeli government opens tourist tunnel near Islamic holy site, igniting protests reminiscent of Palestinian uprising and further souring relations with Arab states.

**25 September:** Israeli soldiers kill five Palestinians and wound about 300 during protest in West Bank town of Ramallah.

**26 September:** Thirty-nine Palestinians and 11 Israelis die in clashes in the worst violence since Israel and the PLO signed peace deal in 1993.

**27 September:** Seven Palestini-

ans and three Israelis killed in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab East Jerusalem. Three of the Palestinians shot dead during stone-throwing protest outside Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine.

**28 September:** Arab shot dead in Gaza by Palestinian police keep lid on protests in most of the West Bank and Gaza.

**29 September:** President Clinton invites Netanyahu, Arafat, Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to White House summit.

**6 October:** Following White

House summit, Israel and PLO launch weeks of marathon talks on Hebron redeployment.

**11 December:** Guerrillas from the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine shoot dead a 12-year-old Israeli boy and his mother in a drive-by shooting near the PLO-ruled West Bank town of Ramallah. Five other settlers wounded.

**12 December:** Israeli farmer shoots dead a Palestinian worker in southern Israel.

**24 December:** Netanyahu and Arafat meet on Hebron. US Middle East envoy Dennis Ross reports "real progress".

## Israeli deaths in south Lebanon highest for 10 years

**Rashid Sinno**  
Reuter

**Beirut** - Fighting between Muslim guerrillas and Israeli forces and their militia allies in south Lebanon killed 255 people in 1996, when the highest annual Israeli death toll on the last active Arab-Israeli frontline for more than a decade.

The soldiers' deaths make up the highest annual Israeli death toll on the last active Arab-Israeli frontline for more than a decade. In 1995, 175 people died in south

Lebanon violence including 23 Israeli soldiers. A year earlier, 21 Israelis were among 201 people killed there. The 1996 figure is the highest annual Israeli death toll in Lebanon since 1985, when 37 soldiers died.

The Jewish state pulled out the bulk of its 1982 invasion force that year and set up a border zone in the south to protect its northern areas from raids.

Besides the 27 Israeli casualties,

according to Lebanese officials - including 155 civilians and 54 guerrillas belonging mainly to the pro-Iranian Hezbollah and 19 militiamen of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA).

In 1995, the guerrillas killed 33 SLA men while the Israelis and their militia allies killed 72 guerrillas.

The main reason behind the rise in the south Lebanon death figures last year was a 17-day Israeli blitz against Hezbollah in April that - ac-

ording to Lebanese officials - killed at least 170 people, mostly civilians.

A US-brokered ceasefire agreement that ended the campaign, barred firing at civilians but allowed raids on the Israeli-held zone and gave both sides the right to self-defence.

Some 1,000 Israeli troops and the 15,000-strong SLA control a 15-mile-wide zone in south Lebanon. They come under attack almost

every day from Hezbollah and other groups.

Most of the Israeli and SLA casualties fall in roadside bomb attacks against their patrols or in coordinated guerrilla raids on patrols or posts using mortar bombs, rockets or machineguns.

Lebanon's official National News Agency has reported that, barring the April Hezbollah-Israeli fighting, the guerrillas have launched a total of 365 attacks on the Israeli or

SLA in 1996. The remainder of the 1996 casualties in Lebanon include 13 people killed in various explosions in the country and 132 killed in non-political murders. There were 103 non-political murders in Lebanon in 1995 and 130 a year earlier.

■ Israeli planes raided suspected guerrilla targets in south Lebanon on Tuesday night shortly after a guerrilla attack on two Israeli army posts.

A Hezbollah spokesman in Beirut said that the air attack targeted the Jabal Sojoud area of the Qlim al-Toufah ridge used by the pro-Iranian guerrillas to wage attacks on Israeli forces occupying the border zone.

Sources with the SLA militia said the Israeli jets raided Qlim al-Toufah after guerrillas attacked two Israeli posts on the edge of the Israeli-held zone. No one was hurt in the assaults, they said.

كما من الأجل

# The Church and Labour should be in harmony

**T**he bishops are on a roll. From the Bishop of Rome down the bearers of cross and mitre are getting assertive. Their New Year messages exude confidence, the conviction that if not the Force then certainly the zeitgeist is now with them. This seems especially true of the Anglicans. It is not just what Simon Coventry, Mark Birmingham and other leading occupants of the bench of bishops are saying but the style with which they are saying it. Gone entirely is that hand-wringing diffidence which used to characterise Anglican pronouncements. Just before Christmas John Redwood told the bishops – this is an ancient Tory incantation – to provide a moral lead to the nation. Well, that is what they are now doing and it serves him right. It may not amount to an episcopal injunction to vote Labour or Liberal Democrat, but it comes pretty close to an invitation to throw off Tory rule for the sake of the nation's moral health.

It could be that the bishops have imbibed too deeply of Christmas spirit. After all, they are prelates of churches in which only a fraction of English people are active. Yet in a secular society the churches retain some influence, greater than numbers alone would justify; the bishops are still in a position to stir things up. Many people will demur at that. They hear the bishops talking morality and say, didn't last year see that word gang-raped by the politi-

cal bully-boys. In 1996 morality became a code-word for reactionary views about sex and the family.

The bishops' New Year messages are about morality, yes, but they talk about obligations wider than parents and children, husbands and wives. They have not left those behind but they have placed them in a social context. Morality, they say, is also about the equity of institutions, about income distribution, urban deprivation. Morality is about judging the balance between public and private interest and determining the right way of conducting politics in a pluralist democracy. This is moral talk worth hearing – especially by the parties of the centre and left.

Earlier this week, in a desperate piece of concocted controversy, the BBC tried to set the Labour Party up by squeezing remarks about abortion out of Archbishop Thomas Winning. Imagine, a Roman Catholic cardinal saying something disapproving about abortion! The real story was that those Scottish Labour MPs who, the cardinal claimed, were being censored on the abortion issue are, generally speaking, old Labour and well to the left of Tony Blair on questions of trade unions, state involvement in the economy and so on. It is a fair bet that Cardinal Winning is also, economically speaking, on the left.

That is why, for all the surface ripples about the cardinal's attack on Tony Blair, Labour needs more not less



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intervention in politics by bishops like him. Labour does not have to concede a single inch over the abortion question to see that there is a lot more to morality than the fate of foetuses. One of the oddest aspects, indeed, of this whole Blair/Winning-abortion story is the suggestion that there is anything new in it. Cabinet papers for 1966 released this week confirm Harold Wilson's personal caution when it came to the great "permissive" legislation passed when he was Prime Minister. His hesitation stemmed partly from his own personal convictions, partly his awareness of Catholic sentiment in and

around his Huyton seat on Merseyside. What has changed since then?

Ordinary Catholics vote, like everyone else, for reasons of personal interest. They also pay some attention to their priests who, like the Pope in Rome, have never exhausted morality in talking about sex. Morality is also about justice in the tax system, about social obligations, the distribution of income and wealth and, as the present Pope often says, just treatment by employers of their employees. Working-class Catholics traditionally voted Labour, as they still do, because Labour represented fairness in society and fairness at work. Cardinal

Winning's statements about abortion are not going to change that nor, pace the BBC, are they intended to.

In his New Year message the Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, deplored what he called "pick and mix" morality. Some people will say, ah, you cannot have fairness in society and "social morality" without buying into reactionary religious positions on abortion (forbidden) and marriage (indissoluble). This is nonsense. There is a moral case to be made for the termination of pregnancy, constructed from fundamental tenets about individual choice and social responsibility. The point the bishops are making is surely that politicians can and ought to reach into these fundamentals and argue them through, escaping the superficiality of who worships where how many times a month.

The fact is that Labour is well-positioned on this moral territory. Even in its modish, Mandelson form it still has easier access to the language of commitment, responsibilities and reciprocal obligations than the Tories can ever aspire to. Tory talk about the morality in the tax system, about social obligations, the distribution of income and wealth and, as the present Pope often says, just treatment by employers of their employees. Working-class Catholics traditionally voted Labour, as they still do, because Labour represented fairness in society and fairness at work. Cardinal

1997 is straightforward. The more bishops mounting the pulpit the better... When they start influencing voters, then Labour needs to start worrying. Because then it will have to address the milk-and-water nature of so many of its tax and spending commitments and the resulting doubt whether a Blair-led government would make Britain a fairer place.

## A perfect meal: read all about it

The latest edition of *Cultural Trends* confirms what a cursory glance in any bookshop window will tell you: books with pictures sell more copies than those without. Among books with pictures, increasing numbers of cookery books are being bought. But to what effect? We know that certain of Delia Smith's favourite things (eg peppers for grilling) are now supermarket staples. Yet we also know that along with all those books, the volume of sales of convenience foods is rising, suggesting that less peeling, chopping and slicing is going on in the nation's kitchens. How is that circle to be squared? Could it be that more and more people are eating Marks & Spencer ready-to-eat meals with one of the latest cookery books propped up in front of them?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Will Saudis allow nurses a fair trial?

Sir: The article by the Saudi ambassador on "Why Islam's law bewilders the West" (1 January) was of real interest as an answer to the populist point of view on the current proceedings against the two British nurses, which as he rightly pointed out is mistakenly concentrating on the law as practised in Muslim states. It is not however an answer to those of us concerned with the behaviour of law-enforcement agencies and the conduct of fair trials involving foreigners. One can accept that criminal codes are God-made and that it is up to the foreigner in a country to observe the laws, but in this particular instance our legitimate concerns are not being addressed.

There is more than enough gossip, most of it apparently from Saudi circles, and little enough known fact surrounding this case. The main substantiated cause of concern is that one way and another consular officials were prevented from access to the accused, contrary to the Vienna convention, and that the nurses may have been subject to unfair pressure over a period of four days to extract a confession or confessions. If our understanding is in any way correct the facts must be thoroughly probed at trial and the so-called confessions rejected. It is our understanding that this is also Muslim law.

The main causes of anxiety as to the trial procedure are two.

If the basic right to have a lawyer to speak for you at trial and question witnesses to be observed?

Is the trial to take place in public? If not, will the authorities allow international legal rights observers to be present? With due respect to our local diplomats who will have the right to be present under international convention, they are not versed in international procedural standards.

All legal systems, including our own, have common procedural problems that are tackled over time by human beings whose first duty to man and God is to protect the innocent before considering the punishment of the guilty. There is, at least one example of a country that combines punishments and laws unacceptable to Western opinion with the highest standards of judicial and procedural fairness. Perhaps the example of the Singapore courts could commend itself in this context.

STEPHEN JAKOBI

Director

The Fair Trials Abroad Trust

Richmond, Surrey



replaced by self-serving propaganda from managers and quangos.

Hospital staff around the country are battle-weary from protecting patient services from the sham of the market. Unless this is replaced by a long-term commissioning system for secondary health care, increasing numbers of doctors, nurses and paramedics will retreat disillusioned into retirement or private practice. Health care in the UK will be in danger of following the US example of escalating costs and inconsistent standards.

MALCOLM SIMMS FRCS  
Consultant Surgeon  
Birmingham

Sir: May I offer an encouraging thought for the year ahead? At a time when so many brickbats are hurled at the National Health Service, it makes a pleasant change to be able to give unstinted praise.

My wife, a stroke victim without any real prospect of recovery, is a patient on Priory Ward of Gainsborough General Hospital. There, during the festive season, no effort was spared to provide good cheer. Everyone, including regular visitors like myself, partook of an excellent Christmas lunch. The nursing and support staff gave of their best to provide celebratory warmth and merriment, and they certainly succeeded.

Of course, all this has nothing to do with NHS internal markets: it is about a real concern for the happiness of people struck down by illness. So long as such admirable spirit continues to prevail in our hospitals, all is not lost.

PETER ORR  
Guisborough  
Cleveland

NHS staff driven to despair

Sir: In her predictive review of a Labour-governed 1997 (30 December) Poly Toyneby restates your editorial theme that the post-1990 NHS structure "actually works well" and will be left unchanged. Certainly few hospital clinicians would press for major organisational upheaval but even fewer would tolerate the loathsome hypocrisy of the internal market for another five years.

The reality of hospital funding through individual GP transactions and short-term health authority contracts is a two-tier, stop-go service where clinical need is subverted by financial caprice and public accountability is

### Caring anglers? Ask the fish

Sir: For the many anglers D A Beaumont (letter, 28 December) says he knows who go to great lengths to ensure the safety and welfare of fish they catch. I know many who do not.

I observe them quite regularly on my daily walks, sitting along the river bank and, in the summer, often asleep with cans of lager at their side waiting for the electronic bite alarm on their rods to wake them if they get a bite. What skill is there in that? I rarely see an unhooking mat used; hence the damaged fish one can see in photographs in the angling press, injured by either being de-hooked on gravel surfaces or being kept too long with other fish in a keep net.

My daily walk to the river is to check on swans for a local rescue group. Most days – somewhere – a tackled swan is rescued and treated, often for the surgical removal of barbed hooks and other angling equipment. There is now a need for a National Swan Convention held in the autumn at Stratford-upon-Avon to review this growing problem.

Anglers may well wish to give the impression of caring for the waters and wildlife but there is a cruel and unacceptable face to this sport.

ROSALIND BARNES  
Langley, Berkshire

Sir: D A Beaumont suggests that the purpose of fishing for most anglers is to "pit their wits and expertise against the ... fish". This would be

fine if the fish were a willing participant, and if it were not risking rather more than the angler.

Angling organisations sometimes claim that fish are cold-blooded and therefore cannot feel pain.

However, there is no scientific basis for this argument and the RSPCA Medway Report concluded that fish could feel pain the same way as any other vertebrate. Why else would they have a nervous system?

Mr Beaumont says anglers care deeply about the fish that they catch and return. I suggest they demonstrate their compassion in a simple but effective way: stop fishing.

RICHARD MOUNTFORD  
Birmingham

Sir: As a superior species on this planet we fail miserably in being compassionate to those who are at our mercy. At no time in human history have animals suffered at the hand of mankind as much as now.

Mahatma Gandhi said: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress should be judged by the way it treats its animals." As we approach the 21st century, mankind should make peace with the animal kingdom.

NITIN MEHTA,  
President, Young Indian Vegetarians  
West Croydon, Surrey

Sir: Seventy years ago, two small children in North Yorkshire happened to be in at the kill when a hunted vixen was run to earth.

She was dug out by hunt servants, whose spades chopped up her cubs – for Lord G was hunting out of season. She was thrown to

the hounds, and her one surviving cub was taken for rearing and future sport. Farmers benefited, since shooting foxes would have cost them their tenancies, all the landowners being sportsmen.

My sister and I were lucky not to be bloodied by having the shredded vixen smeared over our heads, the traditional initiation of newcomers to the sport.

PETER HILL  
Tunworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire

sell your existing house and buy your new one as soon as possible, before the much-lauded boom. But no one has ever said the housing market is governed by logic.

Dr MARTIN PREENE  
Chester

### No more 'safe' white-collar jobs

Sir: Yvette Cooper (article, 30 December) sees middle-class anxiety over jobs as an illusion, a valuable one, prompting sympathy for those whose jobs really are both fleeting and unrewarding.

But Ms Cooper should not assume that the middle class consists entirely of young, highly-educated job-hoppers. For some years, many older middle-class people have been losing the "safe" jobs they acquired many years previously. These workers possess neither the qualifications of the youthful go-getters, nor the streetwise skills of working-class survivors. Many are opting for "early retirement" at 50, rather than face the unequal battle for a job.

By all means let us have more educational opportunities for a dispossessed labour force, but let us also provide solid support and career guidance for those middle-class people for whom redundancy is not just another career move.

This is a task which local colleges should cheerfully take on, as they did in the Eighties. Then the "bridge" programmes for unemployed white-collar workers flourished. Surprisingly, Margaret Thatcher.

ROLAND PEARSON  
Pinner, Middlesex

### Oasis in the land of hyperreality

Sir: Invoking Baudrillard, Peter Popham describes a redubbing of Oasis stories as "post-modern" ("Oasis after the orgy", 30 December). He compares the band's simulation of cultural and aesthetic forms (such as their apparent aping of celebrity) unfavourably with the originality of the Beatles (who apparently discovered transgression, narcotic and otherwise, first). Popham claims that the redubbing of images by and of Oasis keeps them famous long after they should have disappeared. I would like to suggest that Popham misses an important aspect of Baudrillard's argument.

It is right to say that Oasis can gain our attention without absolute justification, but this does not mean that their status is entirely false. This is because they occupy what Baudrillard calls the *hyperreal*. This is not the unreal any more than it is the absolutely real. Rather, it is a dimension of indistinction between (particularly media) representations and what they purport to represent. The real status of hyperrealities is undecidable, because the media image is real (for example, effective, even if not truthful) just as real things are always minimally mediated (for example, televisually).

This complication is absent from Popham's article, which appeals to entirely real and unreal things as soon as it suggests that (real) people are doped into consuming Oasis despite their false (or unreal) media image. Against these appeals, it is worth considering the possibility that Oasis fans buy their music despite as well as because of their media image, and thus Popham's article is just another article about how there should be fewer articles about Oasis.

Dr MARTIN MURRAY.

School of Library and Media Studies

University of North London

London N7

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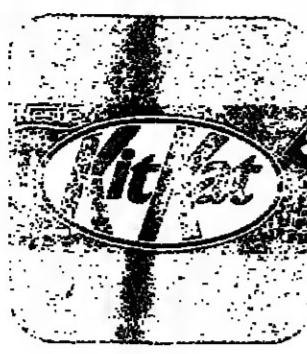


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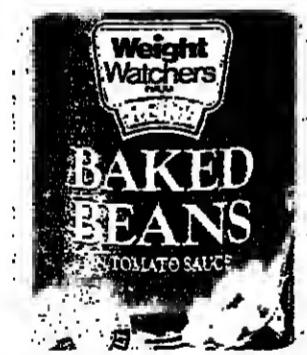
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#### Food

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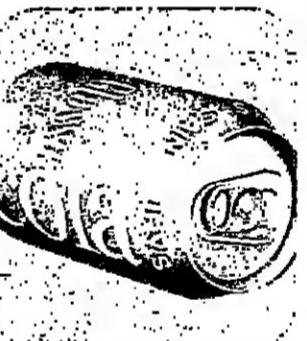
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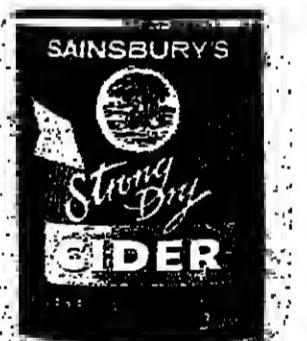
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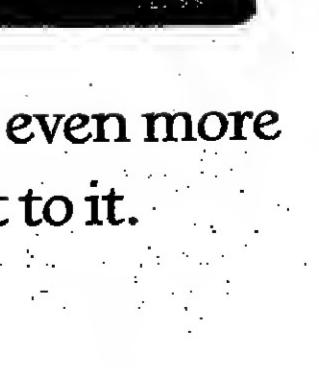
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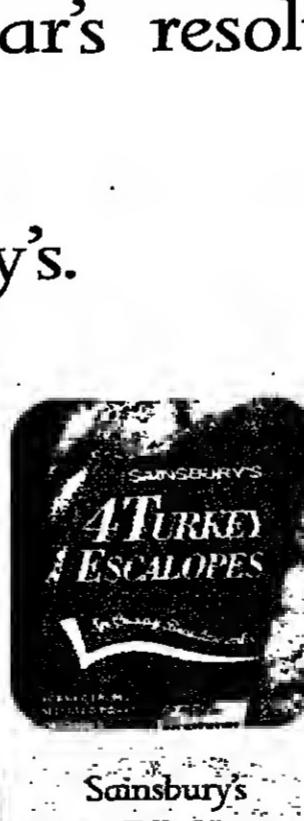
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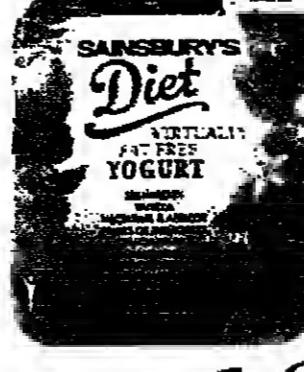
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# The joys of a sound Constitution

**E**veryone knows that the British Constitution doesn't exist. And that it is unique in not being written down in documents – certainly not in a single one. It is famously a set of arrangements and understandings. So if we want to understand it, the obvious thing is to go to the Old Bailey in London, or our local town hall and magistrate's court, and see it at work. Children have always done that, and are usually properly impressed by the odd mixture of showmanship and seriousness they see.

Even so, Walter Bagehot, the great 19th-century constitutional essayist, approved of someone who said: "The cure for admiring the House of Lords was to go and look at it. He only half meant it, but the alternating clamour and tedium of many of the public workings of government might indeed fuel the cynicism that opinion polls report – the easy disdain of the well-governed."

So it is sensible to take an interest in the likes of Burke, Macaulay and Bagehot (or Plato, Melbourne and a dozen others) who have discussed the nature of government, often

rather in the manner of anthropologists describing how the odd behaviour of some tribe in fact makes sense. Not that any prescriptions, or the system, are set in stone; Edmund Burke noted, as though to counteract his seeming traditionalism: "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation".

True to the spirit of much writing about the Constitution, we can begin by saying what it is not. Though an understanding of the nuances of the system is best to be found in something like the *Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations*, it is absolutely not about politics. It is the machinery by which politics works. It has to be able to breathe in a vacuum. Its ability to help a rabble become a society is never better displayed than when the politicians are at each other's throats fighting about who should be in charge.

A constitution depends on the sort of people it governs. You apply the same adjectives to a constitution as to the people it fits (or ill-fits). The British Constitution might not work for any other people, but it is, like us, reasonable without being rational. We pride ourselves that no other people

would tolerate, or could have contrived, so haphazard a way of preserving justice and liberty.

Yet on all sides, people want to reform the Constitution. Some of the urge flows from a sense that the system ought to reflect their present style, not their inherited habits. In fact, the Constitution is sometimes almost too good at being modern: it allows, for instance, the current taste for trivial abuse and grandstanding to the media to pervade the House of Commons: the verbal truce promised after John Smith's death lasted for weeks, not months.

Besides, much of the British Constitution's style (the parliament building itself, and many of its customs) are antique only in appearance: they were put together by Victorians in an age when Mammon wanted to clothe itself in medievalism.

But it is true that some habits attach to the thing being very old, and proud of it: the roles

of heredity and religion, and some habits inherited from the 17th century, are genuinely important and might be hard to shift. They may become more fashionable if we learn that deference can be liberating, and need be only a very mild form of subservience.

Even the most peculiar bits of the Constitution constantly refresh themselves. The monarchy certainly does, if a little bizarrely. The monarchy appeals to many; to the thoughtless, because it provides a family soap opera; to the intellectual, because it enshrines lofty mysteries; and especially to women, "who care", as Walter Bagehot remarked, "50 times more for a marriage than a ministry". Nearly everyone senses that it would be a pity if it ceased to last.

We have the House of Lords, in which people who share only the characteristics of having had (often surprisingly recent) ancestors who were rapacious or industrious or both, and who have mostly had an Eton education, are allowed to talk and vote on an equal footing with the most distinguished elder statesmen, churchmen and lawyers in the land (who are often the scions of long dynasties of the worldly wise).

Some absurdities in the Constitution are merely the accretion of habits formed in simpler and much more corrupt times. These include the first-past-the-post voting system, which systematically disenfranchises a

substantial minority of thoughtful voters; that is, those who vote for a third party outside its select and politically eccentric heartlands. It also disenfranchises people who live in areas where there are few others of their political stamp; that is, socialists in suburbs and conservatives in slums, neither of whom can hope to dent the outcome of an election. The Constitution should appeal any democrat who believes in rule "by and for the people", and therefore most socialists.

The Constitution is at its most antique when it enshrines

a prejudice against the mob. It is designed to eliminate any serious danger of direct democracy, and is instead a system for selecting and controlling a governing élite (the parliamentarians). A plebeian democracy, perhaps ushered in by the silicon chip, would, in one sense, be merely the last step towards democracy, but in another, the first towards popular rule. But direct democracy risks the perpetual excitement of surfing moral panics, or the tedium of living in a Swiss canton.

The Constitution's arrangement should shock any who believe that it is important to have checks and balances between the executive parts of government (the civil service, or Whitehall), the legislature (the law makers or Parliament) and the justice system. We operate, as Bagehot remarked, "by choosing a single sovereign authority and making it good". That is, Parliament, control of which is centralised in the hands of a ruling party. Within that rule, the rule of the few is enshrined by Cabinet creating, as Lord Halsbury noted, an "elective dictatorship" which is modern only in degree.

Yet, with all these absurdities, what has caused us most disquiet recently is not a major structural issue: it serves as a good example of why getting in a ladder about the Constitution is almost always a waste of time. It is the sleaze factor that most worries us.

with it the operational part of their consciences.

In any case, the point is that we ought to cure the evil in stages, beginning with the least and lightest actions. This is what is happening. Worried by sleaze, or the patronage system which appoints the boards of quangos, we appointed the Nolan committee to inquire into and propose ways to root out bad practice. Only if that fails – and there is no evidence yet that it will fail – will we need to move on and worry that we are perhaps enticing the wrong sort of people into politics. We must hope that we are, because we can't be at all sure that we can quickly and certainly replace them with anything superior.

If we decided the practices and people in Parliament were rotten, and we couldn't see how to make them other, we might then consider reforming the Constitution in some way to make sure that MPs could have no power for wrong-doing. We might be tempted to set something over Parliament, to celebrate (as some misguided people do) the way that the EU's institutions might be set over ours; or judges might oversee parliament; or some "people's jury" might do the job.

We have no evidence from anywhere in the world that the Constitutions which were spawned by, but tried to improve on, our own are in fact superior to their scruffy parent. They are more formal, more orderly, more explicit. In most of them, parliament is subject to superior authority. The result is the appearance of order but a great deal more muddle in outcome.

*Tomorrow: The danger of proportional representation and reforming the Lords*

**Britain's system of government may look silly, but improving it would be difficult. In the first of a three-part series,**

**Richard D North makes the case against major reform**

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contrived, so haphazard a way of preserving justice and liberty.

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Besides, much of the British Constitution's style (the parliament building itself, and many of its customs) are antique only in appearance: they were put together by Victorians in an age when Mammon wanted to clothe itself in medievalism.

But it is true that some habits attach to the thing being very old, and proud of it: the roles

of heredity and religion, and some habits inherited from the 17th century, are genuinely important and might be hard to shift. They may become more fashionable if we learn that deference can be liberating, and need be only a very mild form of subservience.

Even the most peculiar bits of the Constitution constantly refresh themselves. The monarchy certainly does, if a little bizarrely. The monarchy appeals to many; to the thoughtless, because it provides a family soap opera; to the intellectual, because it enshrines lofty mysteries; and especially to women, "who care", as Walter Bagehot remarked, "50 times more for a marriage than a ministry". Nearly everyone senses that it would be a pity if it ceased to last.

The Constitution is at its most antique when it enshrines

a prejudice against the mob. It is designed to eliminate any serious danger of direct democracy, and is instead a system for selecting and controlling a governing élite (the parliamentarians). A plebeian democracy, perhaps ushered in by the silicon chip, would, in one sense, be merely the last step towards democracy, but in another, the first towards popular rule. But direct democracy risks the perpetual excitement of surfing moral panics, or the tedium of living in a Swiss canton.

The Constitution's arrangement should shock any who believe that it is important to have checks and balances between the executive parts of government (the civil service, or Whitehall), the legislature (the law makers or Parliament) and the justice system. We operate, as Bagehot remarked, "by choosing a single sovereign authority and making it good". That is, Parliament, control of which is centralised in the hands of a ruling party. Within that rule, the rule of the few is enshrined by Cabinet creating, as Lord Halsbury noted, an "elective dictatorship" which is modern only in degree.

Yet, with all these absurdities, what has caused us most disquiet recently is not a major structural issue: it serves as a good example of why getting in a ladder about the Constitution is almost always a waste of time. It is the sleaze factor that most worries us.

with it the operational part of their consciences.

In any case, the point is that we ought to cure the evil in stages, beginning with the least and lightest actions. This is what is happening. Worried by sleaze, or the patronage system which appoints the boards of quangos, we appointed the Nolan committee to inquire into and propose ways to root out bad practice. Only if that fails – and there is no evidence yet that it will fail – will we need to move on and worry that we are perhaps enticing the wrong sort of people into politics. We must hope that we are, because we can't be at all sure that we can quickly and certainly replace them with anything superior.

If we decided the practices and people in Parliament were rotten, and we couldn't see how to make them other, we might then consider reforming the Constitution in some way to make sure that MPs could have no power for wrong-doing. We might be tempted to set something over Parliament, to celebrate (as some misguided people do) the way that the EU's institutions might be set over ours; or judges might oversee parliament; or some "people's jury" might do the job.

We have no evidence from anywhere in the world that the Constitutions which were spawned by, but tried to improve on, our own are in fact superior to their scruffy parent. They are more formal, more orderly, more explicit. In most of them, parliament is subject to superior authority. The result is the appearance of order but a great deal more muddle in outcome.

*Tomorrow: The danger of proportional representation and reforming the Lords*

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## The Eurosceptic lie about why we fought Hitler

**M**any people believe that Britain fought two world wars to preserve her independence from the looming German-dominated European superstate. So they lead a receptive ear when urged, as they often are these days by the Eurosceptics, to resist the Teutonic hordes for a third time. But the truth is that Britain never went to war to prevent a German invasion.

The summer of 1940, when Britain stood alone, back to the wall, against Nazi tyranny, and changed the course of history, is a powerful national myth. Like many myths, this one is essentially true. But it has been misappropriated, its lessons perverted, by Eurosceptic nationalists.

Even leaving aside the absurdity of comparing Kohl and the Eurocrats to Hitler and the Gestapo, the picture of plucky little Britain going to war in defiance of the invading Hun has no basis in fact. Both in 1914 and 1939, Britain fought not to protect herself from German invasion but to influence events on the Continent.

In 1914 Germany went to war to break out of a perceived encirclement and to pre-empt a feared French attempt to win back Alsace and Lorraine. Britain went to war in support of Belgian independence, her French ally and the balance of power in Europe. At no point were the Germans in any position to invade Britain.

In the Second World War they were, and would have done, but for the victory of the RAF in the Battle of Britain. But when did Hitler come to have designs on British independence?

On 1 September 1939 Hitler invaded Poland, whose integrity Britain and France had guaranteed; both declared war on Germany. On 10 May 1940 Hitler attacked France and the Benelux countries. German success was swift; by 4 June the Allied armies in northern France were shattered and the British had withdrawn from Dunkirk. On 16 June France sought an armistice.

Although German military and naval staffs were already considering the problems of an invasion of Britain, Hitler hoped Britain would make peace, leaving him a free hand on the Continent. Some in Britain were receptive to that idea. On 17 June R A Butler, deputy to Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, met Swedish minister Björn Pritz to discuss peace feelers.

Next day, 18 June, Churchill put a stop to that sort of thing by delivering in the House of Commons his "finest hour" speech: "Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war ... If we fail then the whole world ... will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age ..." Even so, it was not until



**Guy Keleny**  
Britain took up arms in two world wars not, as many believe, to prevent an invasion but to bring its influence to bear upon the Continent

16 July that Hitler ordered preparations to begin for the invasion of Britain.

Three days later, on 19 July, Hitler delivered his celebrated ultimatum: "I feel obliged ... to direct once more an appeal of reason to England ... Herr Churchill may dismiss this declaration of mine ... In that case I have freed my conscience about what is to come."

On 22 July Halifax issued Herr Churchill's dismissal of that declaration and on 24 July the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi party newspaper, carried the headline: "England has chosen war". On 1 August the Luftwaffe was ordered to smash Britain's air defences as a preliminary to invasion.

The notion that Britain fought the Second World War to avert a threat to her sovereignty is the reverse of the truth. That threat arose only because she resolved to fight the war to a finish, to overthrow Nazi tyranny and put a stop to German aggression on the Continent.

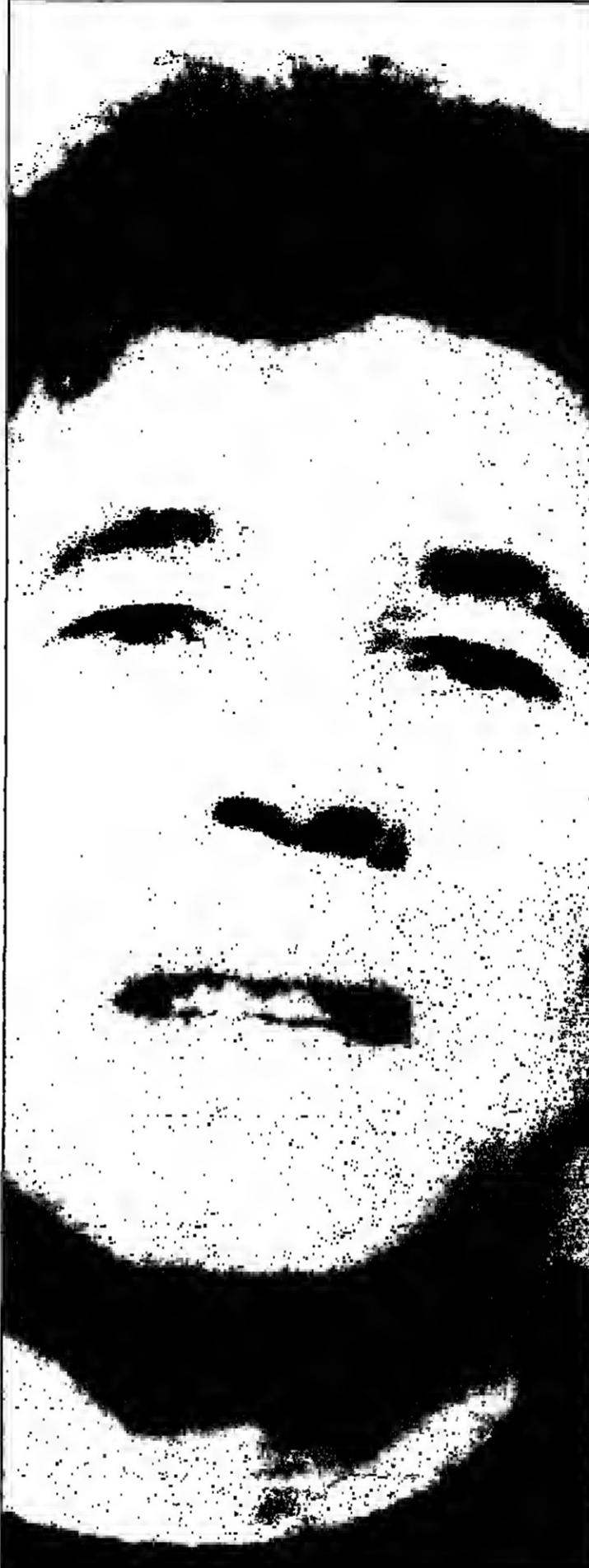
What would peace with Hitler in 1940 have meant for Britain? We can see some pointers. Hitler the racist admired the British Empire – for reasons that would have appalled many British

empire-builders – and had no wish to destroy it. He was all for Britain oppressing and exploiting the non-white peoples of Africa and India while he did the same and worse to the Jews and Slavs of Eastern Europe.

Churchill would have been replaced by a more compliant prime minister. Goodwill towards Germany would have become compulsory. The pro-Nazi former King Edward VIII might have returned to the throne, displacing his brother, George VI. What is certain is that Britain's power to shape events in Europe would have been extinguished.

**B**ritain would have been rendered impotent, excluded, on the margin of a continental superstate. To prevent that, Britain dragged down Napoleon in the 19th century and Hitler in the 20th. Strange if something very like it were to happen in the 21st through British withdrawal from the European Union. Eurosceptics are fond of claiming the mantle of Churchill. The events of 1940 suggest the one that fits them is that of Halifax and the appeasers. The decision to fight on in June 1940 was an act of engagement with Europe in her darkest hour, when the faint-hearts would have cut Britain loose.

If the two world wars have a lesson for us today as we face historic decisions about how far and how fast to go along the road of European integration, it is a lesson not about defending British sovereignty but about maintaining British influence for the good in the affairs of continental Europe.



Fred West would have been delighted to hear that a movie is being made of his murderous life

## Freddy's final fantasy – watching you watching him

by Suzanne Moore

**T**wo years ago, Fred West hanged himself in his prison cell before his trial could take place. He must have known his suicide would only add to his celebrity status. His illiteracy did not get in the way of his knowingness. On the cell wall he had scratched his own epitaph: "Freddy, the mass murderer from Gloucester."

Freddy? West implicitly understood that we are now on such intimate terms with our killers we call them by their boyish first names. Like Jack the Ripper and Jack the Lad. Freddy the Fox got away. Two years on, Freddy would be delighted to know he is still in the news. He would be pleased that what he did to make himself feel important has worked.

A deal to make a film of his life has been struck by the Official Solicitor with the Portman Entertainment Group, which has purchased the non-documentary film television and video rights to archive material from the West estate. Among the goodies on offer are tapes of West talking to the police, copies of his favourite pornographic films and pages from his memoirs. The contract also includes an option agreement on the biography written by Geoffrey Wansell called *An Evil Love*. Wansell wrote his book with the co-operation of the Official Solicitor who offered him access to the hours of police interviews with West, and his small memoir, *I Was Loved by an Angel*, written in his prison cell, as well as much other written material. This, the "intellectual property" of West's life, was offered up by Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, who, in his duty to administer the West estate, considered that it was his duty "to protect the financial interests of his five minor children". Now, in seeking to maximise the returns on the estate, Harris has made a film deal.

What, one might ask, is a government official doing flogging the rights of a serial killer's life? Any financial benefit that is being obtained for the children is surely outweighed by the emotional distress caused if the film was ever to be made. Can any tragedy eventually be exploited? While everyone has the deepest sympathy for the West children and may even feel they deserve some kind of compensation, the idea that this compensation is to be earned in this way is sordid beyond belief. Money has already changed hands for Stephen and Mae West's book *Inside 25 Cromwell Street* and Anne Marie West's book *Out of the Shadows*. But one senses these books were written not purely for money but as a floundering attempt to make some sense of the hell that their authors have lived through.

Books and films, however, are not the same thing. What would a film of West's life story attempt to achieve? Who would play West? Anthony Hopkins or Colin Firth? If West's life was extraordinary it was also increasingly repetitive – dramatic tension would have to be found in the murders themselves. Otherwise we could have ourselves a little romance. Rosemary and Fred's "evil love" for each other would be the narrative through which we encountered the man's life.

The movie, I guess, like all the books yet to come, would promise to throw some light on the darkness, help us understand the mind of an ordinary monster. The serial killer industry does, after all, rely on the idea that its products are educational rather than entertaining. Yet what exactly are we to learn? That killers have had backgrounds, bad genes, bad blood? Despite the cod science, this is what it all boils down to. And despite the efforts of some writers to turn murderers into existential anti-heroes, symptomatic of the malaise of the late-20th century, these men are disturbingly samely, their fantasies of control arising out of their predictable inadequacies, their fear of women, their fear of their desire for women, manifesting itself in dull brutality.

What exactly is it that we want to catch sight of? What is this perverse desire for imagery rather than imagination? When the remains of the young women were carried out in boxes from "the house of horror" by grim-faced policemen, we realised that there wasn't actually much to see. The tabloids tried to show us what the inside of Cromwell Street looked like with a series of diagrams and plans as if seeing made it more comprehensible. Harassed mothers took along their bundled up toddlers to Cromwell Street so that they could see "what evil looked like".

The uncomfortable truth is that Fred West liked to watch too. He was a voyeur. He liked to watch pain but he liked to call it pleasure. He liked to watch his wife having sex with other men in front of him on a video, through a peep-hole. Watching gave him a feeling of power. Watching films about him killing might make us feel more in control, too.

Our fascination with West is also sexual. I doubt there will be offers flooding in on the rights to film Thomas Hamilton's life. We may not like to admit it but the sexual torture and death of young women is titillating. We live in a culture, after all, in which the murder of women is part of our proud heritage. Not long ago I got out of a car at midnight in Shoreditch only to stumble upon an assertive young American woman carefully explaining how to remove a uterus from a female corpse. I was in the middle of a Jack the Ripper tour.

Just as few of us ever remember the names of the Ripper's victims, so, too, are all the lost girls of the West case unlikely to have their stories properly told. No one will find them interesting enough individuals to make movies of their brief lives or write long psychological profiles about them. No one much cared how they explored their fantasies. If a life's worth can be measured by its hold in the public imagination, theirs is still without much worth. West didn't think they were worth anything either.

Yet, as long as this killer is so much more fascinating to us than the killed, then we cannot afford to be outraged at the prospect of a film of the life story of Fred West. And, as long as we are in thrall to such death stories rather than life stories, then we will want to see everything we can. Just like Freddy did.

## The stove that's hot in Hollywood

Tinseltown is gaga about Agas, it seems, as the cast-iron chunk of British kitchen culture finds its way into films as well as film-stars' homes, writes Ann Treneman

**T**ime magazine started it by printing three pages on the Great British Stove. But the *Express* has gone the most gaga over the Aga saga with its story on the hottest new thing in Hollywood, both Julia Roberts and Dustin Hoffman own Agas. "Forget fashion or fragrance, the latest must-have in America is nothing less than an old-fashioned British cooker," according to the *Express*. "Americans covet our history because they haven't any of their own, and the closest way they can attain this is to buy British."

I consulted Ian Heath, marketing manager of Aga-Rayburn, to find out what was going on in Tinseltown. "We haven't been going out of our way to get that business," he said easily. But he did reveal that the craze is spreading even into animation. "Have you seen *101 Dalmatians* yet?" he asked. "Well, I believe Cruella de Vil has one in the kitchen – a cream two-over-one."

I could not believe it. Well, if Cruella had one, then other villains were sure to follow. Soon Cinderella would be scouring away as her step sisters warmed their bunion on its doors, and the Wicked Queen would be admiring her reflection in the stove's insulating lids ("Mirror, mirror on the Aga"). It's a whole new market.

But there is something suspicious here. Can Miss de Vil really own a cream two-door? This is a woman who wears Siberian tiger and sleeps in a feathered bed, as in plumbed. At the very least one would expect a zebra-striped four-door that stands on red stiletto heels and sports a marabou flue. Further investigation was needed.

I rang several Americans to find out more, but they feigned ignorance. Didn't they feel an overwhelming desire to discover Britain's ancient rural roots by purchasing the cooker invented by a Swede in 1922 and manufactured in the Midlands using Russian ore and Australian coal? "No, not really. Never heard of it," was the universal response.

It turns out that only 300 exist in the entire nation (that's six per state) but it does weigh 1,000lb and cost £10,000 (as opposed to about £3,775 here). So why was it so special? Some say it had no dials and lots of ovens that you had little control over did not do justice. More impressive were its globetrotting ways – an owner in the Lebanon flies out Aga technicians once a year and there is a solid fuel one in an Antarctica Quonset hut – and the fact that it is a literary phenomenon.

For instance, there's Julia of Church Cottage in Joanna Trollope's *The Men and the Girls*: "The kitchen was warm, even at two in the morning, because of the Aga, the dark-blue Aga that Julia had chosen with such grave care. Hugh had teased her about it ... 'Miss Immaculate Conception', he called her. 'Miss Perfect Understatement. Miss Shimy Shoes'."

Silence greeted this passage – time to give up on transatlantic education – but there was more than a hint of Cruella in those words. Understatement is not her thing, but she does wear shiny shoes (and bodysuits, too) and her zebra-chained sitting room is immaculate.

**M**ary Berry, author of *The Aga Book*, claims that her own four-over-claret blue Aga is not a stove but a way of life. But is it a Hollywood way of life? "I don't know about Hollywood but I went to America last year to do Aga workshops – Atlanta, New York and around – and America is the perfect place because if you are rich there you have two houses and one is in the mountains, and what better welcome can you get than an Aga?"

She also has Americans who fly to England for her Aga cooking work-

shops (she is booked well into May) and her Aga-ness is infectious. "Whenever I empty the washing machine I automatically pick out things like that jumper I want to wear tonight, and

carefully fold it on the simmering plate, and it is soon cosy and ready.

Some of Mrs Berry's clients have

come back 14 times, and not all are

Julias living happily ever after in



Pretty cooker: Julia Roberts loves her Aga

Church Cottage. "My people at workshops tell me all sorts of stories. Like, 'I don't mind my husband going but I don't want to lose the Aga'. Or, if they are getting divorced, 'It's bad enough losing him but not the Aga, too.' One can see the ad now – a Diana-like look slams the door, throws the keys away and drives off in the Aga."

As gas have already moved away from a purely cosy image. "In television commercials they are there as an upmarket consumer durable – an AB1 kitchen that people aspire to," says Ian Heath. It is also getting easier to own one: the power flue means you no longer need a chimney, and the new Aga Companion is a conventional electric cooker in disguise.

**B**ut Aga will never be just a cast-iron shell with style because its owners revel in so much. There is even a MAGA-zine for them to write in to, and it was here that I came across the most likely explanation for the Cruella factor. "A further use our plate-warming oven has had is saving the lives of sick puppies," writes Lady du Burlay of Buntingford, "and on one occasion driving off six four-week-old puppies who had to have a medical bath."

Of course, Cruella would not be using the plate-warming oven. As she announces to the puppy man: "I don't care how you do it. Drown them. Burn them. Got any chloroform? I don't care how you kill the little beasts, just do it and do it now." As only Cruella could say: "I love the smell of near extinction."

But then, as I was sitting in the movie theatre, disappointment struck. Oh, there is an Aga all right, but it is in the wrong kitchen. The person putting over it is not Cruella but Nanny, played with Aga-like homeliness by Joan Plowright. It is comforting, it is warm, it is a stove for saving puppies, not roasting them. It is a stove for the Julias of this world, and not those who drive a car with the number plate "Dev II". No one's gaga in this saga after all, but it was not so nice while it lasted.

**SHOULD OLD AQUAINTANCE BE FORGOTTEN?**

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# business & city

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## Fear for jobs as Pitman talks of outsourcing to India

**Barrie Clement**  
Labour Editor

The head one of the country's biggest banks will spark fresh fears of a massive new wave of job losses in the new year after warning that the industry still employs too many people and should consider "outsourcing" services to countries like India.

Sir Brian Pitman, chief executive of Lloyds TSB, told a group of business leaders that companies could benefit from

"much lower costs" by contracting out many of their activities.

"I don't think we have fully confronted the opportunities in outsourcing and what the consequences will mean for our business as we really grab the opportunities of much lower costs ... by getting business done elsewhere," he said.

Addressing a conference to launch "Leading People", a study of leadership in financial and business service sector, Sir

Brian said that increasing competition would lead senior management to consider "much more outsourcing than we have at the moment".

In a reference to the whole of British industry, he said: "It is not a question of producing quality products at a high price, it is producing top quality products at the lowest price possible."

Companies in widely different sectors such as British Airways and North West Water are

already taking advantage of the low salaries earned by proficient and English-speaking Indians. Data-processing staff in the sub-continent generally earn around a tenth of the salaries received by British colleagues and so the burgeoning software industry in India can comfortably undercut in-house services in Britain.

A report by the Delhi-based National Association of Software and Service Companies pointed out that the sub-conti-

nent bad "the second-largest English-speaking scientific and trainable manpower pool in the world".

While it started from a low base, the association calculated that the Indian software sector had grown 46 per cent annually between 1990 and 1995 - almost twice as fast as the business in the United States.

The author of the leadership report, Amin Rajan of the research consultancy Create, believes the resurgent interest in

"outsourcing" could mean farms farming out cheque processing, insurance companies contracting out the payment of claims and securities dealers in such activities. One chief executive of a banking group told Mr Rajan that 15 per cent of the company's costs could be saved by contracting out money transmission.

In the 1980s companies began by outsourcing in-house ser-

vices such as catering and cleaning, then proceeded to farm out information technology systems. Next an increasing number of "core" activities will be contracted out, he believes.

However, Mr Rajan argues in

the report that the first "out-

sourcing" wave would benefit

companies in the UK.

He said that the cost savings could often be illusory. He detected that some companies were already taking back some activities which had previously "outsourced".

## Buoyant start heralds rate rise after election

**Diane Coyle**  
Economics Editor

A new Labour government will have to raise taxes and interest rates to prevent the economy overheating and reduce government borrowing, according to New Year forecasts published today.

The predictions coincided with fresh evidence that 1997 is opening with a swing, with a survey showing business confidence at an all-time high and many companies planning to raise prices. Retailers reported that the January sales bad got off to a flying start.

The shadow Treasury minister Alan Milburn yesterday predicted a new start for the economy with a new Labour government. The recovery, he said, was "threatened on every side by Tory economic failure".

The party produced a dossier on the Conservative Govern-

ment's economic record, claiming that "ordinary families have been left £2,120 worse off in tax terms by the 22 Tory tax rises since the last general election".

Mr Milburn added that inflationary pressures were growing and interest rates rising.

Increasing the cost of borrowing might have to be one of the first acts of an incoming government if consumer spending accelerates between now and the election, according to a new report out today from independent consultancy Cambridge Econometrics.

It notes that if Labour does win the election, the party will inherit an economy in far better shape than its predecessors in 1974 and 1979 enjoyed. Even so, tax increases would be needed to bring government borrowing under control and finance its spending plans, the report predicts.

"Politically, the best time to

introduce these is as early as possible after the election. Fortunately the timing is also likely to be right from the viewpoint of the macro-economic background," it says.

A separate forecast from the City investment bank Goldman Sachs makes the same diagnosis. It says that although nothing dramatic should go wrong with the economy in 1997, there will be signs of overheating in a widening trade deficit and faster earnings growth. The strong pound will help keep inflation close to the Government's 2.5 per cent target but at the expense of export growth.

Unemployment is likely to fall below 1.7 million by the end of this year and to 1.5 million by the end of 1998, Goldman Sachs predicts.

"We expect the next government to take early action to ensure that the period of overheating is quite short-lived," write the report's authors, David Walton and Martin Brookes.

The Goldman Sachs report predicts a lower-than-expected shortfall in government finances in the present financial year that hinders growth, but says that by the time the economy slows back to its normal trend, the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement will be too high for comfort on unchanged tax and spending plans.

The likely need to raise interest rates will take the shine off record levels of business confidence, according to a survey of medium-sized companies by Lloyds Bank Commercial Services.

The survey shows optimistic businesses planning to increase employment by more than at any time since the question was first asked in 1993. The upturn during the past six months has been centred on services, especially transport and communications and hotels, catering and leisure.

But much of the upsurge in confidence is down to plans to raise prices and increase profit margins, the survey shows. The balance of firms raising rather than cutting prices during the last six months had been the lowest since mid-1993.

Michael Riding, managing director of commercial banking,

said: "Middle-market companies increasing prices in the coming months will stoke inflationary pressures."

The resulting upward move in interest rates would dent confidence, he predicted.

## Shoppers on a spending spree

**John Willcock**

Shoppers have more than fulfilled the promise of a Christmas spending boom, with a last-minute rush helping to quell fears of disappointing sales, according to anecdotal evidence from stores throughout the UK.

Post-Christmas sales have also kicked off in buoyant fashion. Verdict Research, which compiles nationwide retail statistics, is "fairly upbeat" about the Christmas spending season. A Verdict spokesman said: "Retail sales for December were up about 7 per cent on the same period last year, which is not far from expectations."

Clothing seemed to have had a bad time compared to forecasts. But the spokesman added that more generally, although there were some downward figures for total sales in the week before Christmas, the last two days turned out to be buoyant.

As for the post-Christmas sales, the consultancy said they had got off to a good start.

The huge Lakeside Shopping Centre at Thurrock, Essex, attracts shoppers from all over the south-east of England, and as such its strong sales performance is a sign of the general picture. Heather Hudson-Oldham, marketing manager, says

Lakeside was visited by 36,000 cars a day in the run-up to Christmas, representing around 650,000 customers a week. This is up on last year's 32,000 cars per day in the same period.

Lakeside's busiest day of the year came on 27 December when 48,000 cars visited the complex, representing around 144,000 shoppers. Again this was up on last year's figure of around 44,000 cars.

The amount of money spent during the run-up to Christmas definitely exceeded expectations, she says. "I don't think the Budget had any negative impact."

A spokesman for the John Lewis Partnership, the department store and Waitrose supermarket chain, said it had set itself a tough estimate for the two weeks to last Saturday, which as a group it had achieved. "Our 23 department stores signalled a 6-plus per cent increase compared to a year ago - about what we had hoped," said the spokesman.

Sue Sadler, a spokeswoman for Marks & Spencer, added to the Christmas cheer: "Towards the end of the Christmas period trade went very well. People were marching into the shops. Our sales, which started on Friday, have been very successful, extremely busy."

**Michael Harrison**

The National Grid yesterday dismissed fears that Britain could be in store for widespread blackouts as the electricity transmission system nears breaking point.

A spokesman said it was "simply not true" to suggest that the Grid was in danger of not being able to meet demand, forcing it either to reduce voltage - which makes lights go dimmer - or impose selective power cuts.

The fears have been fuelled both by worries that gas-fired power stations with interruptible supply contracts could be

suddenly taken off-line and by the surge in demand during peak periods which has occurred this winter.

The big test could come on the second Tuesday of the month - 14 January - in the day of reckoning when demand traditionally hits its annual peak.

A spokesman said it was

confident that it had enough surplus generating capacity to meet whatever demand the worst cold snap could produce.

"There is more than 60,000 megawatts of capacity linked to the transmission system while peak demand last winter was 48,700 megawatts," the spokesman added. "It is simply not true to say the system is in danger of collapse. The amount of planning that goes into scheduling plant months ahead is huge. There are hundreds of engineers working on this night and day, both at our national control centre and in the power plants."

Part of the Grid's problem is that most of the country's power stations are located in the North while the majority of demand is in the South. This can cause bottlenecks in the Midlands, forcing Grid engineers to call up more expensive generating capacity in the South to meet demand.

It has two methods of meeting unexpected shortages. One is to issue what is known as a Notification of Inadequate System Margin - an invitation to generators to bid more expensive plants into the electricity pool to ensure demand is met.

The second is reserve capacity it keeps on the system to

meet sudden surges or unexpected breakdowns forcing power stations to trip out. The standby capacity ranges from 400 megawatts to 1,500 megawatts.

Plant availability during the winter peak has risen from 97.1 per cent at the start of the decade to 98.7 per cent last year.

However, plant margin - the amount by which installed capacity exceeds forecast demand - has been steadily falling as older power stations are retired and not replaced at the same rate. Plant margins are running at 20 per cent compared with 30 per cent and higher in the early 1990s.

## Water industry operates in 'tax-free zone'

Labour yesterday renewed its assault on the privatised water companies, claiming that new figures released by the industry watchdog Ofwat revealed that they paid virtually no mainstream corporation tax on their core water and sewage businesses.

Three of these - Severn Trent, Southern Water and Welsh Water - had made a negative tax contribution by offsetting their core activities against the overall tax liability of the parent company.

Mr Dobson said this was the

sixth year since privatisation that the companies had paid almost no tax.

According to Mr Dobson, the Ofwat data released to Labour show that eight of the 10 had paid no mainstream corporation tax at all on their core water and sewage businesses. Three of these - Severn Trent, Southern Water and Welsh Water - had made a negative tax contribution by offsetting their core activities against the overall tax liability of the parent company.

Mr Dobson said this was the

If that was not enough, he gave them tax breaks on £7.7bn of investment made at a time when the industry was still publicly owned, Mr Dobson added.

According to Labour, the only two companies which have paid corporation tax since privatisation are Northumbrian Water and South West Water with payments totalling £16m. However, they did not break down how much of this was advanced corporation tax which could be offset at a later date against future tax bills.

Frank Dobson: Water firms given £1.5bn from taxpayers

## Two Brits deliver the goods with US courier service

**David Usborne**  
New York

At first sight, Hugh FitzWilliam-Lay easily fits the cliché of the typical Brit import in New York. He is tall and good looking and has the kind of accent that Americans fall for. But when asked at parties about his profession, Hugh's line departs from the stereotype. Neither writer nor banker, he is in fact a postman.

The description is accurate if hardly adequate. In fact, Mr FitzWilliam-Lay is president of a courier business that was recently listed as one of America's fastest-growing private companies by *Inc Magazine*. Called CitiPost, it will soon be in 16 US cities and recently opened shop in London.

CitiPost is run jointly out of a modest West Manhattan warehouse by Mr FitzWilliam-

Lay and his partner and the company's chief executive officer and founder, Richard Trayford, another Brit. Launched in 1991 with an investment of \$19,500, its revenue this year should exceed \$18m - that represents growth over five years of 1,664 per cent.

This being New York, however, CitiPost's journey has not been without bumps. There was the embarrassment of one of their employees being nabbed two years ago as the mastermind of a \$1.9m Tiffany's diamond heist. Much more awkward, however, have been their brushes with the Manhattan Mafia.

They make an intriguing pair. "Ex-greasy rocker meets 'toff,'" suggests Mr Trayford, 33, who, after being expelled from DeVeze's Comprehensive, was a bass guitarist with aspirations to rock'n'roll fame before stum-

bling into the delivery industry after a spell as a motorcycle courier in London.

Mr FitzWilliam-Lay, 31, by contrast, studied computer sciences at Edinburgh University and came to New York via a brief modelling stint in Japan, to help the *Economist* magazine computerise its accounts in America. Before meeting Richard, he worked as a chef in the trendy mid-town restaurant Vong.

His secret: offering an overnight, proof-of-delivery, mailing service for volume mail that is exempt from the statutes that give monopolies for ordinary letter carriage to government postal services like the US Mail and, in Britain, the Royal Mail. In practice, this means a lot of printed material from financial institutions as well as media and entertainment companies.

The principle distinction of CitiPost, however, is its low-low prices. Rather than attempting to deliver everywhere, like the US Mail or the mega-courier companies like Federal Express, CitiPost operates exclusively between cities and between business districts within those cities. "We don't do the farms or the suburbs," Mr FitzWilliam-Lay explains.

Nor does CitiPost have huge fleets of lorries and aircraft. Parked against the wall of their Manhattan warehouse are rows of tri-carts - small metal trolleys that haul around the sidewalks of Manhattan. For inter-city and international carriage, commercial airlines do the work.

The strategy now is break-neck growth. By reaching abroad - aside from London, CitiPost is in Frankfurt and will soon be in Hong Kong - on daily route.

In the two weeks before the police finally caught up with him, he continued making his daily calls at the shop.

On their tangles with the Mafia, they are not surprisingly, more circumspect. They suspect, however, that their main competition in New York, three other exempt-mail courier companies, are all fronts for the feared Lucchese organised crime family.

But while they have been intimidated verbally, no physical harm has come either to themselves or the business.

The only reason they ignore us is that with their courier companies they want to maintain a public appearance of propriety and they have to turn over their cash." Mr Trayford ventures. "The atmosphere in the industry, though, is that there is absolute corruption going on."



A nice little runner: Hugh FitzWilliam-Lay (left) and partner Richard Trayford. Photograph: Jon Levy

جامعة الامان

**Make your mind up time:** The Independent offers readers a selection of shares ranging from blue chips to the more speculative

# Blacks Leisure grabs gold in a sporting year

Never before has there been such a sporty touch to the yearly winners and losers share tables. Leading the top 20 is Blacks Leisure, the leisure wear retailer. Three football clubs feature in the winners' table; so does Hay & Robertson, which has a more than passing interest in the sports world.

And, as if to prove the all-round adaptability of the stock market's new breed of sporting companies, the leader of the bedraggled losers is a golfing group, Clubpartners International.

Blacks represents an amazing turnaround. Once beset by boardroom battles and seemingly going nowhere, the company still had an appalling record only a few years ago. Acquisitions had been disastrous; profits had disappeared; and the dividend cut.

But, helped by the increasing hype surrounding professional football, a greater pursuit of keeping fit and the great outdoors, the company, under the sure direction of Simon Ben-

ley, has prospered. Profits last year were below the £3.7m peak achieved in 1992. Still, the record should be shattered this year with hopes growing that profits could touch £7m.

The footballing hat-trick is Celtic, Caspian (Leeds Utd) and Manchester Utd ('ManU').

of course, kicked off the stock market's interest in soccer skills.

Before the Premiership was formed, before the great replica kit bonanza had taken off and even before BSkyB was pouring money into the top clubs, the famous Red Devils slipped relatively quietly on to the market.

Such was the lack of investor enthusiasm that the shares went to a discount to the issue price and ManU seemed destined to limp along in the market's lower divisions.

Slowly investors, other than those who also supported Manchester Utd and had held shares since the flotation, scented the huge profits which television coverage, sponsorships and replica kits were throwing at what television's football experts



Derek Pain, Stock Market Reporter of the Year, reviews the leading share price winners and the heaviest losers of 1996

like to call "a funny old game". From a 52.6p low in 1992 the shares have romped to a 667.5p high; a performance not very different from Blacks Leisure.

Caspian, as part of a cash-raising exercise, arrived on the market in the summer of 1995; Caspian is, in effect, a reverse takeover. In February it was a little media group with its shares at 8.5p. Then City whizz-kid Chris Akers, who had earlier masterminded the market debut of Freepages through a reverse deal, arrived and seemed immediately to hint for football status. Caspian was linked with a number of leading clubs eventually capturing Chelsea after clashing with at least one of the incumbent directors.

Hay & Robertson, on the undercard of the winners' table at

number 20, is another struggler which has scored from the leisure wear craze. It moved into profits last year and last month announced a marketing deal with high-profile Ruud Gullit, Chelsea's manager.

To counter arguments the market has gone soccer crazy the rest of the winners have little to do with sport. And many of them are small groups where modest investment interest can produce significant price movements.

The losers, too, tend to inhabit the lower reaches of the market.

Runner-up Jarvis is a construction group which has soared on its acquisition of one of the British Rail maintenance operations. Occasional takeover talk has also helped.

BBB Design and Abacus Re-

ruitment are good examples of the power of the tiddler when it comes to drawing up yearly share performance tables.

Both have modest share capitals and low capitalisations. BBB is valued at £6.4m and Abacus at £4.7m. The market's in their shares is obviously exceedingly tight. BBB is a computer company which moved back into profits last year. Chairman Philip O'Donnell has a controlling interest and three other shareholders account for near-19 per cent of the capital.

Cairn Energy and British Petroleum Syndicate are at the forefront of the strength of the oil sector and Surrey Free Inns leads the informal managed pub contingent.

Clubpartners, leading the motley crew of losers, has bulked itself with a sad run of losses. Yet hope springs eternal at its own 19th hole. The shares, it is true, have collapsed 28.5p over the year to stand at 2.5p. Yet they should be even lower. The company warned on several occasions it was in ne-

## Top 20 winners in 1996

	1996 closing price	Year's % gain
Blacks Leisure	386.5p	680
Jarvis	142.5p	506
Celtic	338p	488
BBB Design	77.5p	417
Abacus Rec.	84.5p	369
Ferrum	7p	367
Caspian	45p	338
Emerald En	4p	300
Cairn En	416p	268
Rosspur	8p	256
Goodwin	130p	242
Man Utd	667.5p	241
Pex	133.5p	226
British Borneo	810p	224
TDS Circuits	21p	223
Surrey Free Inns	416p	220
Pearson	18.5p	208
DBS	487.5p	205
Hay & Robertson	132.25p	201
Pan Andean Res	51.5p	190

## Bottom 20 losers in 1996

	1996 closing price	Year's % fall
Clubpartners	2.5p	91.9
NSM (sus)	8p	89
Lionheart	7.75p	89
Memory Corp	60p	86
Haemocell	4p	84
Omnimedia	11.5p	82
Jacques Vert	32.5p	82
Yorkshire Fd	14.5p	82
Hanson	8p	80
Electrophoresis	38.5p	79
Applied Dis	40p	79
Telspec	177.5p	78
Creigton's Nat	27.5p	78
Colleagues	57.5p	78
Fit	100p	77
Alpha Omikron	50	74
Forward Tech	25p	72
First Call	7.75p	69
Campbell & Arm	5.25p	69
Tring	14.5p	66

gotiations which could lead to an offer well below the market price. Eventually it said the bid would come in the "region of 1p". So unless there are un-

expected developments the shares are hugely overvalued—another of the market's little mysteries. Memory Corporation is a spectacular faller. The repairer of defective computer chips slumped 363.5p to 60p last year. In the previous year it touched 555p.

## Something old and something new from City professionals

Most of the 10 fund managers who tipped shares for us last year have emerged with reputations intact. Indeed the 22 per cent overall gain registered by their selections over the past year is close to double the 11.6 per cent gain recorded by the market over the same period.

As ever, there were widely varying performances. Bernard Clark at the renamed Hill Samuel Asset Management emerges as the clear winner with Sema, the computer services group, which more than doubled. After being runner-up last time he receives a well-deserved bottle of fizzy drink.

Also worthy of more than honourable mention is Colin McLean of Scottish Value Management, who justified his faith in recovery stocks by tipping Scholl. As predicted, new management has done wonders for the shares which are up over 50 per cent on the year.

Philip Winston of BZWIM, part of the mighty Barclays empire, also proved a consistent outperformer. His choice of Trinity International, the rapidly-expanding newspaper group, showed a healthy 35 per cent gain although that was not enough for him to retain last year's top spot.

At the other end of the scale, the failure, again, of the conglomerate sector to spark into life proved the undoing of Mike Grimble of Norwich Union, who tipped BT&R, and Vanessa James of Legal & General, whose choice was Tomkins.

They are joined in this year's more limited entry by some other old faces, along with a smattering of new competitors.

Bernard Clark  
Hill Samuel AM  
The UK equity market is short

of genuinely advanced technology share issues, so there were few surprises amongst the experts when shares in nuclear specialists AEA Technology quickly raced up from their 280p flotation price last year to the current 396p. No further nuclear power stations are planned for the UK, but there will still be considerable work to be done on de-commissioning old and obsolete plants, particularly overseas. Even so, the company expects future growth will come mainly from non-nuclear products and outsourcing services to industry, ranging from robots to software.

The current share price seems high enough for the present, but by the end of 1997 margins should be moving up rapidly as the effect of re-structuring fades. By then, a market capitalisation to sales ratio of 1.5 will be more appropriate, giving a price target of 550p.

Colin McLean  
Scottish Value Management  
With many of 1996's trends set to continue in the coming year, I believe growth businesses will still be at a premium. My share for 1997—Cairn Energy, the oil and gas exploration and production company—has already been a winner over the past 12 months. However, while it starts 1997 at higher levels, good underlying asset progress means that the shares are still cheap.

Drilling success in 1996 has turned Cairn into a substantial independent oil company. Its recent takeover of Command Petroleum of Australia, which operates in India, adds to its attractions. Capitalised at around £500m, with the shares at 417p, Cairn could even attract a bid itself, in a sector where I expect

more corporate activity in the coming year.

Julian Fosh  
Scottish Amicable

It is time to right that fire at British Gas. Following a near 50 per cent underperformance over the last two years, the three key issues which have dogged the company during this period are close to resolution. Firstly, the recent deal with BP to sell some of BG's loss-making "take-or-pay" contracts is an extremely positive move, establishing a base level for the liabilities at around £2bn.

Secondly, February's division of the company into two constituent parts should enable the undervaluation of the oil exploration division, which is as big as Lusmo and Enterprise combined, to be corrected. Finally, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into the last regulatory review should be resolved by 13 April. A favourable outcome could theoretically be worth £2bn to British Gas. The shares at 224p are a buy for the brave.

Justin Seager  
Kleinwort Benson

SkyePharma, the new vehicle of Ian Gowrie-Smith of Medeva fame, is a small company with expertise in drug delivery technology. As a result, it offers the growth potential of a pharmaceutical company, with lower risk, as the customers are the drug companies which have already taken the commercial route. SkyePharma is currently trading at 110p, with the shares at 417p, Cairn could even attract a bid itself, in a sector where I expect

more flexible dosing, which also attracts doctors and patients. In return Skye receives royalty payments of 3.5 per cent. The shares are currently 73.5p.

Mike Grimble  
Norwich Union  
Where return goes, so does risk. What promised to be a good year for equity and bond markets was close to resolution. Firstly, the recent deal with BP to sell some of BG's loss-making "take-or-pay" contracts is an extremely positive move, establishing a base level for the liabilities at around £2bn.

We expect more volatility in the equity and bond markets in 1997. Investors who are less risk tolerant might consider the undervaluation of the oil exploration division, which is as big as Lusmo and Enterprise combined, to be corrected. Finally, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into the last regulatory review should be resolved by 13 April. A favourable outcome could theoretically be worth £2bn to British Gas. The shares at 224p are a buy for the brave.

Robert Talbot  
Royal Sun Alliance IM

George Simpson has only been managing director at GEC for a few weeks but he has realised that urgent action is needed. His four main aims are to improve the strategic focus, address the cash mountain, change to a more customer-facing culture and concentrate the development spend to improve the growth rate. The first two objectives should bring immediate benefits. Despite the challenges of how to deal with the consolidation of the European defence industry, the bull case for GEC lies in this corporate restructuring. All this upside can be bought for a market rating at the recent price of 382p, making the stock a convincing buy.

Tom Crombie  
Scottish Equitable  
Making money in 1997 is not go-

ing to be easy. I expect to see a lot of volatility with the incoming election and decisions about EMU later in the year. However, the stock market background is really quite good and I am going for Sainsbury, currently out of favour with just about everyone. Profit forecasts have been cut again since the interims in November and the share price has performed very poorly in the last few years. It used to be thought of as the Rolls-Royce of the food retail industry, but now everyone thinks it has lost its way.

Well, I like Sainsbury. The underlying consumer climate is good and the do-it-yourself business should do well next year. The share price discounts a lot of bad news and gives an above average yield. It is a turnaround story with a danger that they will continue to lose market share, but I think it is basically a good operation and they will get it right again. Worth buying at 388p.

Vanessa James  
Legal & General

The case for British Aerospace rests both on fundamentals and its pivotal position at the heart of the possible rationalisation of the European defence industry. The company has shown itself able to control its finances and there are few concerns over its dependence on the Saudi Al Yamamah contract. The company has established itself as a system integrator and prime contractor with excellent profits and dividend growth potential. Meanwhile, the recent McDonnell Douglas-Boeing merger has removed one commercial aircraft manufacturer. The airlines will now have a strong incentive to support a Boeing.

Finally in this trio of retailing

and the current price of 749.5p, while historically high, still leaves room for growth.

The real money for investors is more likely to be made in the riskier parts of the market.

The prospects for the next 12 months are more difficult to divine than the last, with a general election looming and Wall Street looking ever-more precarious after the mountainous heights scaled by US equities in 1996.

None the less, our tips for this year provide a wide spread of large capitalisation stocks to provide a firm base for the portfolio, with a liberal sprinkling of recovery and speculative stocks to add, we hope, sparkle.

Retailing is a sector which should do well in the expected consumer boom in 1997. It is the year when Sears, the slumbering giant of the industry, must come to life. If it doesn't then it will be revamped, taken over or even broken up. Assets are more than 120p a share with Selfridges probably worth 45p. The shares have enjoyed a festive rally. At 45p they are selling at 18 times prospective earnings.

Storehouse shares have had a torrid time in recent months as the market has become worried about its flat sales and profits that appear to be driven by cost-cutting. Shares in the BHS and Mothercare group have plunged from 361p in April to 258p at the year's close but they now look oversold. They trade on a forward rating of just 12, a substantial discount to the sector which seems an anomaly.

Finally in this trio of retailing

and the current price of 749.5p, while historically high, still leaves room for growth.

The real money for investors is more likely to be made in the riskier parts of the market. Some investors might be put off by the fact that Flextech, which owns pay-TV channels such as UK Gold and Bravo, has never made a profit and yet has seen its market capitalisation soar to an impressive £750m. Profits are in sight, however, thanks to a joint venture with the BBC to launch new channels for digital. The new business, based on the BBC's huge programming library, will build on a stellar assets already in the Flextech stable, including a 20 per cent stake in Scottish Television and a controlling share (soon to be 100 per cent) in UK Gold and UK Living, which are worth £300m between them. Flextech could emerge as the digital champion, emulating the spectacular rise of BSkyB. The shares at 677.5p are worth a punt.

In the same vein is Pace Micro Technology. With the way not clear for the launch of up to 20 digital television channels in the UK by late 1997, BSkyB is expected to give Pace the go-ahead to manufacture over 100,000 set-top boxes. Pace, one of four preferred bidders, will be pushed to meet BSkyB's tight deadline to supply the decoders, but the company's extensive experience of international digital television markets should stand it in good stead. The shares are not cheap at 230.5p, but could be rewarding.

Caspian is another company which should do well out of new television technology, having positioned itself to exploit the

City writers

How they performed in 1996		
Tipped at	Price now	Gain/loss

## obituaries / gazette

# Pennar Davies

Pennar Davies was among the most scholarly, religious, and passionate men to have written in the Welsh language during the 20th century. A prolific writer, he combined in his poetry and prose a polymathic command of language, theology, and psychology with a personal tenderness rooted in his Christian faith, which was by turns mystical and practical in its concern for human frailty and the world's suffering.

Whether in his delicately wrought love-poems or in his more contemplative novels and spiritual journals, he laid great emphasis on both *eros* and *agape*, endeavouring always to balance them in a richly complex whole by means of myth, symbol, and a sometimes labyrinthine erudition which few of his readers were able to penetrate without difficulty.

William Thomas Davies was born, a miner's son, at Mountain Ash in the Cynon Valley in the old county of Glamorgan, in 1911. He took the name Pennar from Aberpennar, by which the town is known in Welsh, as a sign of his identification with the native culture of Wales. Using the pseudonym Davies Aberpennar, he wrote poems both Welsh and English up to about 1948 but thereafter he chose Welsh, which he had learnt as a young man, as the medium for almost all his

literary work. He was deeply committed to the Welsh language and it, together with his religious convictions, was the bedrock of his nationalism. During the 1970s, together with two other academics, Ned Thomas and Meredydd Evans, he cut off the power at Peniarth television transmitter in a campaign for an improved Welsh-language service which led to the establishment in 1982 of S4C, the fourth channel which now broadcasts programmes in Welsh.

Left-wing and pacifist in politics, he stood as Plaid Cymru candidate in the steel town of Llanelli at the General Elections of 1964 and 1966. He was an effective public speaker, though not averse to the lofier manner which his audiences and congregations came to expect of him as a leader of Welsh reli-

gious and political life. His winning of the Llanelli seat would have raised the intellectual debate in Wales by several notches above what it was during the 1960s, but it was not to be; he attracted only the more radical sections of the chapel vote and made little dent in the Labour majority.

After a brilliant career at University College, Cardiff, where he graduated in Latin in 1932 and in English the year following, he went to Balliol and Mansfield Colleges, Oxford, and then to Yale University, where he took his doctorate in 1943. In that year he married Rosemarie Woolff, a refugee from Nazi Germany, who promptly learnt Welsh and made it the language of their home. During the 1940s he was a member of the Cadwgan Group, a small circle of intel-

lectuals who used to meet at the Rhodda home of J. Gwyn Griffiths, later Professor of Classics and Egyptology at University College, Swansea.

Davies spent three years as a minister with the Independents in Cardiff before his appointment in 1946 as Professor of Church History at Bala-Bangor Theological College, a bastion of the Congregationalist cause in Wales. In 1952 he became Principal of the Memorial College at Brecon, a post in which he remained, after the college's removal to Swansea in 1959, until his retirement in 1981.

Pennar Davies wrote in a variety of literary and scholarly modes. He published, besides a barrage of pamphlets, six volumes of short stories, six novels, and several works of a theological na-

ture, of which *Y Brenin Altud* ("The Exiled King", 1974), a study of Christ's practical goodness, is perhaps the most mature and rewarding. Some of his poems, which refer as often to Newton and Einstein as to the heroes of the Welsh pantheon, are breathtaking attempts at reconciling the discoveries of science with religious belief.

Among the figures from Welsh history to have captured his imagination was John Penry, the Puritan pamphleteer, executed in 1593 on suspicion of being the Martin Marprelate who had attacked the institution of episcopacy and lampooned the Church of England.

For myself, I always found him extremely good company, not least during a trip to Finland in 1977, when, on midsummer's eve, we found ourselves sitting on an island beach to-

gether as the sun dipped, but never sank, below the horizon. I shall always remember how Davies was much taken with the metaphysical implications of the midnight sun, relishing the thought that, albeit temporarily, darkness had been banished from the world.

**Meic Stephens**

**William Thomas (Pennar) Davies, writer and theologian:** born Mountain Ash, Glamorgan, 12 November 1911; Professor of Church History, Bala-Bangor Theological College 1946-50; Professor of Church History, Memorial College, Brecon 1950-59; Principal 1952-59; Principal and Professor of Church History, Memorial College, Swansea 1959-81; married 1943 Rosemarie Woolff (four sons, one daughter); died Swansea 29 December 1996.



Dormer: the art of the maker

Photograph: Edward Barber

cast a witty, disenchanted eye over state funding for the arts, the burgeoning of fashionable theory and the uneasy relationship between craft, design and architecture.

The objects that Dormer admired by the end of the 1980s were the visibly useful modest ones – thoughtfully designed ceramics and innovative furniture, both one-off pieces and prototypes for mass production. His flat in the Barbican, shared with Jane, his wife and dearest friend, revealed a humane and rational taste, tempered by a romantic sensitivity to materials and processes. In the last few weeks of his life he radiated a remarkable energy and optimism, planning books and projects and, as always, generously encouraging other writers and researchers.

For Dormer design and morality were inextricably linked. His seven published books (with two further books to appear posthumously), numerous exhibition catalogues, talks and articles take the reader to the heart of the stormy design debates of the last 15 years.

**Tanya Harrod**

**Peter Andrew Dormer, writer:** born Fakenham, Norfolk 1 January 1949; Assistant Education Officer, London Borough of Haringey 1976-79; Assistant to Chief Education Officer, London Borough of Brent 1979-81; Councillor, Ealing Borough Council 1978-82; Reviews Editor, Crafts 1981-83; Co-director, Design Analysis International 1987-90; Visiting Fellow in the Critical Appreciation of the Applied Arts, University of East Anglia 1994-96; author of *The New Jewelry 1985*, *The New Ceramics 1986*, *The New Furniture 1987*, *Meanings in Modern Design 1990*, *Design since 1945 1993*, *The Art of the Maker 1994*, *Jewelry of our Time (with Helen Drutt) 1995*; married 1974 Jane Smith; died London 24 December 1996.

to the Austrian Library in Vienna.

**Norman Borrett**

**Leslie James Kastner, engineer:** born 10 December 1911; apprenticeship, Davies and Metcalfe, Loconoco Engineers 1930-31; 1934-36: development engineer, Osborne Reynolds Research Fellow, Manchester University 1938; Lecturer in Engineering 1941-46; Senior Lecturer 1946-48; Professor of Engineering, University College of Swansea 1948-55; Professor of Mechanical Engineering, King's College London 1955-76 (Emeritus); Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, London University 1974-76; married 1958 Joyce Lillington; died Eastbourne 30 October 1996.

Announcements of deaths, marriages & baptisms, Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, anniversaries. In Memoriam should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 London Wall, London EC2M 5DZ, telephone 0171-293 2822, fax 0171-293 2812, or faxed to 0171-293 2816, and are charged at £2.50 a line (VAT extra). Obituaries, memoranda (memories), obituaries must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £15 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Changing of the Guard: The Household Cavalry mounted the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, Whitehall, and the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am.



## Joan Osiakowski

Joan Osiakowski is probably best remembered by her penname Joan O'Connor, which she adopted in 1950 as a scriptwriter for the BBC.

My first meeting with her in the flesh, as opposed to over the airwaves, was unpropitious. In 1975 my family and I moved to Hampstead in north London and when on our first morning I looked out of the window, I saw a respectable elderly lady picking our roses. With all the possessiveness of a proud new house owner I called forth to be instantly disarmed by Joan, who had tended the garden for the previous owner and was oblivious of the fact that we had moved in. She was tall and distinguished with beautiful bone structure and had the air of a *grande dame*, but her somewhat imperious manner was softened by a beguiling smile and an easy ability for self-deception and mockery.

Born Joan Druce in 1899, she had an unconventional and unsatisfactory childhood, which had probably helped set a lifelong pattern of self-reliance and fierce independence, regardless of accepted mores. She was brought up by a domineering grandmother who, disapproving of her feckless son's marriage to an Irish beauty, helped ensure its failure, and then took upon herself an unwelcome degree of responsibility for her granddaughter's upbringing. Grandmother Druce's brother, John Cross, was married to George Eliot, and after "Great-aunt George" died too moved in, although he always claimed to be "just visiting".

Joan was one of the earliest pupils at the newly established Downe House, along with Elsie Weston and a smattering of Frye and Darwinc - Downe House, having been Charles Darwin's home. There were no rules, good behaviour being based on reason, and Rose Macaulay was one of the teachers. This idyllic interlude in an otherwise unhappy childhood was abruptly brought to an end when it was discovered that one of the founders was a friend of Joan's mother, so Joan was quickly transferred to Roedean. The shock of the new regime was drastic and she twice ran away before the Principal persuaded her that as she couldn't heat the system she might as well make the best of it and help run it.

Roedean was followed by the liberating atmosphere of the



Joan Osiakowski (Osiakowski) in the Bloomsbury Gallery, 34 Bloomsbury Street, c1930

Slade, presided over by the authoritarian and sardonic Professor Tonks, who was horrified at the enormous influx of young women coming to fill the vacancies created by the war. Ironically, it was a good period for the Slade, still basking in the glory of the achievements of its immediate pre-war students - Spencer, Gerster, Carrington, Nevinson and many others - and her fellow students included Winifred Knights, Mary Attenborough, Eve Kirk and a selection of gifted young ladies.

However, after a year she moved on to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, followed by a couple of seasons at the Old Vic with Lilian Baylis, during which time she had the privilege of turning the pages for the aged Elsie Terry at a public reading, an experience she never forgot. A cousin of her father's, Gwendoline Otter, enjoyed giving fashionable artistic parties in Chelsea as young actresses were especially welcome, and it was at one of these she met her future husband, Stanislas Osiakowski.

In 1927, with a small legacy from an aunt, she and Osiakowski, with whom she was by now living, opened the Literary Book Company, in two rooms in Coptic Street, London. Following the pattern of avant-garde bookshops in Paris, and also a favourite venue for the work of Russian and Eastern European artists, it was there that she met her future husband, Stanislas Osiakowski.

She continued adapting novels until just short of her 90th birthday when her memory began to fade, but she would still reminisce happily over Sunday lunch about times past in Kent or Rutland, theatricals at Capsthorne Hall in Cheshire or trips to France. She maintained a lively independence,

and were lucky to escape on the last train before the outbreak of the Second World War. On their return they closed the gallery and moved to Kent, where they spent the war years; Joan taught French at Bebenden and Stanislas proselytised on behalf of the Soviet Union. After the war, with gallery records and stock destroyed by a bomb and insufficient funds to start up again, they settled in Hampstead, where Joan made a new career, adapting literary classics for the BBC, writing scripts and co-authoring a cookery book, *Food for Thought* (1957), with Cecily Finn (Zimmerman).

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After 10 years Joan felt the need to develop on a more serious level and turned her talents to adapting classic novels for BBC radio. She would read a book five times, make notes, and then write her own version with no further reference to the original. Balzac, Mauriac and Rebecka West were among the authors she brought to radio with infinite flair and honesty.

**Peyton Skipwith**

I first met Joan Osiakowski in 1937 and an instant liking developed based on our mutual inability to understand the rules of bridge, writes Ceddy Zimmerman. The war separated our lives until in 1950 we met again by chance on Hampstead Heath, discovered we were neighbours, and had both been recruited to radio with infinite flair and honesty.

To our amazement we sold our first attempt at a series to the BBC, but it was later dropped due to our total ignorance of television techniques. However, we enjoyed writing so much for 10 happy and hilarious years we wrote afternoon plays, humorous series, a cookery book and ideas for two films. Osiakowski and Zimmerman seemed unsuitable names for a comedy duo so Joan became O'Connor and I reverted to my maiden name of Finn.

**Joan Druce, gallery owner and writer:** born 22 March 1899; married Stanislas Osiakowski (deceased; one daughter); died Cherry Willingham, Lincolnshire 30 December 1996.

Kastner was an academic of the old school who pursued his research interests because of their intrinsic worth, in contrast with the present tendency in universities to measure everything in terms of market value. In his 21 years with the Engineering Department at King's College London, he succeeded in strengthening, considerably, the esteem in which King's College engineers are held in the outside world. He secured the establishment of the professorships of Powder Technology and Internal Combustion Engineering and his own research attracted the confection from his own university, Cambridge, of the degree of Doctor of Science in 1967.

Kastner was born in 1911, the son of Professor Leon E. Kastner, a professor of French Language and Literature at Manchester University. He was educated at Dreghorn Castle School, Midlothian, and at Highgate School, from where he went to Clare College, Cambridge, to read for the Mechanical Sciences Tripos. On graduation, he joined Davies and Metcalfe, a company of locomotive engineers in Stockport, first as an apprentice and between 1934 and 1936 as a development engineer. In 1936 he was appointed to the Osborne Reynolds Research Fellowship at Manchester University, where in 1938 he became a lecturer in Engineering

and, in 1946, a senior lecturer. His early research was concerned with the behaviour and design of ejectors; steam or air-driven devices used for pumping air or other gases, thus creating a vacuum. This arose from his experience during his apprenticeship, which involved the manufacture of such devices. At Manchester, he came under the influence of Professor G.F. Muddell and this inspired his interest in the thermodynamics and gas dynamics of internal combustion engines, a research area which he subsequently continued at Swanscombe and King's College London. He was awarded the Graduates' Prize of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1948.

He became Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1955 and a member of the Council of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1955 and, thereafter, played a full part in the institution's main committees, with eight years on the important Membership Committee and even longer on the equally important Education Committee. He was also, over the years, a member of various committees of the Council of Engineering Institutions. A similar situation applied at King's College London, where he was appointed Professor in 1955. Civil and Mechanical Engineering were combined and, in his first year, the college was concerned with the separation of the two disciplines. Kastner became Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

Kastner became a member of

Mr M. C. Daniell and Miss E. K. Booth  
The engagement is announced between Marc Christian, elder son of Mr Wilfried Daniell, of Dubwic, and Mrs Ethel Ingefrid Daniell, of Brighton, and Elinor Katherine, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Booth, of Wimbledon.

**Birthdays**  
Mr David Bailey, photographer and film director, 59; Sir Richard Bayliss, former Physician to the Queen, 80; Mr Leopold Brook, former chairman, Simon Engineering, 85; Mr Christo-

pher Campbell, chairman, British Shipbuilders, 81; Admiral William J. Crowe, US ambassador, 72; The Duke of Devonshire, former Chancellor of Manchester University, 77; Professor Sir Kingsley Dunham, former Director, Institute of Geological Sciences, 87; Mr David Graveney, cricketer, 43; Mr Walter Harrison, former MP, 76; Mr Algernon Heber-Percy, Lord-Lieutenant for Shropshire, 53; Mrs Peters Merchant MP, 46; Sir Bruce Paillo, Governor, Bank of Scotland, 59; Sir Charles Reecu, former researcher and technology director, ICI, 70; Mr Edmund de Rothschild, director, N.M. Rothschild and Sons, 81; Air Marshal Sir Ernest Siddey, 84; Professor John Thomas, chemist, 71; Sir Keith

Aimi Murray, classical scholar, 86; Jimmy Nervo (James Holloway), comedian, 1897; Isaac Azimov, biochemist and science-fiction writer, 1920; Deaf Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), poet, 17; Philip V, King of France, 1722; Marijn Schapenauer or Schön, engraver and painter, 1491; Alexander Wedderburn, first Earl of Rosslyn, Lord Chancellor, 1805; Dr John Mason Good, physician and author, 1827; Barthold Georg Niebuhr, historian, 1831; Fabian Gottlieb Bellingshausen, polar explorer, 1832; Sir Michael Tippett, composer, 1905; Carl Goldmark, composer, 1913; Sir Edward Burne-Jones, poet, 1917; Sabine Baring-Gould, lexicographer and author, 1924; Eleanor Rathbone, social reformer, 1946; Edna May, actress, 1948; Dick Emery, comedian, 1953; On this day the Spanish army recaptured Granada from the Moors, 1492; The Académie Française was established by Cardinal Richelieu, 1635; Georgia became the fourth of the United States, 1788; Britain joined the alliance with Russia and Turkey, 1793; Louis Daguerre took the first photograph of the Moon, 1839; Wagner's opera *The Flying Dutchman* was first produced. Drs

den 1843; Sir Robert Napier led a British expedition to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to release the imprisoned British Consul, 1868; the first municipal crematorium was opened at Hull, 1901; Port Arthur, Manchuria, was captured by the Japanese, 1905; the present building of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, opened, 1905; the Japanese proclaimed Manchuria to be the puppet Republic of Manchukuo, 1932; a rising of anarchists and syndicalists took place in Barcelona, 1933; Britain and Italy (under Mussolini) signed an agreement on the status of Mediterranean countries, 1937; King Zog of Albania was deposed, 1939; cupronickel coins were issued in the United Kingdom to replace silver, 1947;

the first rocket to pass near the Moon - the unmanned Russian *Luna 1* - was launched, 1959; 66 people died after a bus crash at Flores Park, 1961; the first Gauntlet Editon, The Independent, 1974; the first issue of the magazine, 1975; The Gazette, 1976; the first issue of the newspaper, 1977; the first issue of the magazine, 1978; the first issue of the magazine, 1979; the first issue of the magazine, 1980; the first issue of the magazine, 1981; the first issue of the magazine, 1982; the first issue of the magazine, 1983; the first issue of the magazine, 1984; the first issue of the magazine, 1985; the first issue of the magazine, 1986; the first issue of the magazine, 1987; the first issue of the magazine, 1988; the first issue of the magazine, 1989; the first issue of the magazine, 1990; the first issue of the magazine, 1991; the first issue of the magazine, 1992; the first issue of the magazine, 1993; the first issue of the magazine, 1994; the first issue of the magazine, 1995; the first issue of the magazine, 1996; the first issue of the magazine, 1997.

the first issue of the magazine, 1998.

the first issue of the magazine, 1999.

the first issue of the magazine, 2000.

the first issue of the magazine, 2001.

the first issue of the magazine, 2002.

the first issue of the magazine, 2003.

# Henman ready for Gustafsson

## Tennis

DERRICK WHITE

reports from Doha, Qatar

The British No 1, Tim Henman, made a confident start to 1997 yesterday when he coasted into the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open in Doha. The 22-year-old beat Egypt's Tamer El Sawy 6-3, 6-2 to score his second consecutive success over the player ranked 149th in the world.

Henman, who beat the Egyptian 6-7, 6-2, 6-2 in a dead Davis Cup rubber on Wimbledon grass last September, needed just 31 minutes to take the first set and was even more impressive in the second. El Sawy beat the third-seeded Dutchman Jan Siemerink, the world No 15, 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 in the first round after battling through the qualifying competition.

The result means that Henman will improve his present world ranking of 29 which is based on a player's best 14 tournaments during the past 12 months. Henman, who took just 65 minutes to all to overcome El Sawy, will meet Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson in the quarter-finals. The fifth-seeded Gustafsson lost to Henman at Wimbledon.

The Swede, who celebrates his 30th birthday on Friday, beat Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty 6-2, 6-4 in the second round.

The Australian Patrick Rafter paid a high price for his sportsmanship when the Russian, Andrei Cherkasov, beat him in the second round of the Australian Hardcourt Championships in Adelaide. The unseeded Rafter was one point away from levelling the match at one set all when he overruled officials, saying that his shot had landed out.

Because of his honesty, Rafter found himself 13-14 down in the second-set tie-break, instead of being ahead 14-13. He lost the next point to succumb to Cherkasov, a wild card entry, 6-2, 7-6.

"Very few guys would do what he did. Normally you wouldn't say anything and just keep playing," Cherkasov said of his opponent's gesture.

In the next round, Cherkasov will play Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom, who advanced without hitting a ball after the Zimbabwean Byron Black withdrew with a stomach virus. In the first round, Tillstrom beat the world No 3, top seed and defending champion, Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia.

Croatia, France, Australia and the United States are contesting Group A of the event and Switzerland, Germany, Romania and South Africa are in Group B. The South Africans will qualify for the final if they beat Romania tomorrow.

Rosset, wearing a back brace, looked set to steer the second

seeds to a comfortable victory in their Group B tie after the teenager Martina Hingis had easily disposed of Amanda Coetzer 6-1, 6-2 in an hour.

The tall right-hander was in command of his match against World No 10 Wayne Ferreira, leading 6-0, 2-0 when he collided with a half girl at the net and fell to the court clutching his back. The Swiss continued after a pain-killing injection and chiropractic treatment but gritted in agony at the change of ends and was unable to go on.

Rosset's career has been plagued by back injuries and he further damaged muscles around a lower disc during practice on Saturday. He forfeited his opening singles tie to Romania's Adrian Voinea on Monday, but managed to play the mixed doubles with Hingis to secure a 2-1 victory. "That's certainly the only match I've ever won where I walked off the court after winning only one game," Ferreira said. Rosset and Hingis had to force it the mixed doubles.

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Results, Digest, page 21



Martina Hingis powers on to victory for Switzerland against South Africa yesterday before Marc Rosset's mishap

Photograph: Tony McDonough/Reuters

# Jones to return in Bristol's relegation tussle

## Rugby Union

Robert Jones, the former Wales and Lions scrum-half, is back in the Bristol side for their relegation confrontation at West Hartlepool on Saturday, nine weeks after undergoing key-hole surgery for a prolapsed disc.

Jones, who played in Bristol United's 27-25 defeat away to Gloucester United on Saturday, returns to boost Bristol's hopes of avoiding the drop against a West Hartlepool side who have

won just one of their nine matches this season.

"It is a great opportunity for West on their own pitch to get a couple of league points off a side in a similar position," Jones said.

"Unfortunately we haven't always been able to put our strongest sides, due to a number of injuries, when competing with the top sides this season. We then started to fall behind but we know that with one good win that could all change dramatically."

The match was postponed because of a frozen pitch two

Bristol will be without the stand-off Paul Burke and the flanker David Corkery, on Ireland international duty again at Lansdowne Road.

Craig Barlow comes into the side for Corkery, with Mark Taitton playing alongside Jones. Kevin Maggs replaces Simon Martin at centre.

There will be pitch inspection at lunchtime tomorrow before Bristol fly to Teesside.

Moseley, of the Second Division, have continued their recruitment campaign by signing

the former Newport and Coventry scrum-half Richard Turner from his home town club, Hereford.

The United States Eagles yesterday became the latest victims of the freezing weather. The tourists were due to kick off their four-match tour against Emerging Wales at Cardiff Arms Park but not even the ground's undersoil heating system could overcome the elements.

The match was postponed because of a frozen pitch two

hours before kick-off, which now means the Americans will start against Neath on Saturday, weather permitting.

Leicester will make a round trip of nearly 200 miles to Worcester as they build up to Saturday's European Cup semi-final against Toulouse. The Welford Road pitch is covered in plastic sheeting and has a hot air tent suspended over it for further insurance against the severe weather. All other pitches in the area are snowbound, but the enterprising Worcester club have an indoor pitch which

Leicester will use.

The dispute between Bath and their coach, Brian Ashton, is expected to be resolved this week. Ashton is concerned that his coaching and selectorial role has been eroded under the management of John Hall. He is also seeking a clearer definition of the chain of command at the Courage League club. Ashton has, by mutual consent, gone on an extended holiday since last month's Pilkington Cup tie against London Irish.

## Sports letters

## Unfair on League players

From Chris Belsom

Sir: There are still those in rugby who find it difficult to accept the new relationship between rugby league and rugby union and it is clear from his writing that your correspondent, Chris Hewett, is one of them. His ungenerous and blinkered remark that it is one of the joys of the 1996 season for the "dyed in the wool union loyalists to see the rugby league imports struggling to come to terms with the so-called softies' game" (Tigers thrive on teamwork, 30 December) is

anyone who cannot give credit to the obvious talents and contributions of the likes of Robinson and Paul (Bath), Tuigimana (Wasps), Quinell, Bateman (Richmond), Offiah (Bedford) and Jonathan Davies (Cardiff) cannot expect to have his opinion taken seriously. They have all adapted to the "softies' game" very quickly and deserve great credit. Sadly most of the players mentioned see so little of the ball, as play is still, to a large extent, determined by forward control.

The Bath/Wigan games (as well as the Middlesex/Sevens) showed that the running, passing and handling skills are vastly superior in the league game which is more open and certainly faster. It is clearly in five parts of the game absent from league, and only these skills i.e. scrummaging, rucking and mauling, where union is superior. As far as tackling goes I think little needs to be said!

CHRIS BELSOM

Headsley, York

From Robert Crowther

Sir: I'm sure this will cause Newcastle United fans to splutter over their Sugar Puffs, but perhaps they should consider sharing grounds with Sunderland next season (Newcastle divided as Toon army to camp on the moor, 20 December).

Their poorer cousins and arch rivals will have a great new stadium in 1997, which, if used by Newcastle as well, would mean many more fans could watch their team play until a decision is made on their own new stadium.

ROBERT CROWTHER

Witney, Oxon

In the soup over vegetables

From David Eagle

Sir: I was much amused by your report of incidences of celery-throwing at home matches by fans of Gillingham FC.

What most interested me however was the statement by a club official that "it's been something to identify the club with... we're the only club to have a connection with a vegetable". I think that the fans of many clubs, including the likes of Manchester City and Brighton, would take serious issue with this assertion.

DAVID EAGLE

Edinburgh

Letters marked "For publication" should contain telephone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5LL. They should be sent to the address above.

Shortened versions of letters may be taken for space.

CHRIS BELSOM

Headsley, York

From Michael Sainsbury

Sir: I am writing to you in response to your letter (Letters, 20 December). I am sorry to say that I do not believe that the letter you received from Mr B. J. M. Moore was written by me.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL SAINTSBURY

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## Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Rough Quest, runner-up in last year's Cheltenham Gold Cup and last week's King George VI Chase, will be asked to transport the sort of weight in the Grand National that would make an elephant groan. His trainer, Terry Casey, knows this and the gelding is in full preparation for the burden-carrying prospect. Every night he goes to bed swamped with rugs.

The monstrous Rough Quest might look like a beast who could rip a dragon's head off, but is in fact a dainty flower whose muscles don't feel nice when it gets cold. Since he is already a Grand National winner, Casey is happy that this and the gelding is in full preparation for the burden-carrying prospect. Every night he goes to bed swamped with rugs.

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Rough Quest is a property worth looking after. When he captured the Grand National last year it was in a rare style for the race. He won it classily, vaulting with fluency and then employing the sort of spirit finish that only the finest athletes possess. It was with some relief then that Casey received his vehicle back from Kempton's King George VI Chase in one piece.

The crusty Sunbury ground was most unacceptable for Rough Quest, who nevertheless picked up the sort of place prize-money that could buy a flat and did

not pick up any acute physical damage in the process. "He was stiff for a couple of days but

he has an indoor pitch which

Liverpool will use.

The dispute between Bath and their coach, Brian Ashton, is expected to be resolved this week. Ashton is concerned that his coaching and selectorial role has been eroded under the management of John Hall. He is also seeking a clearer definition of the chain of command at the Courage League club.

The match was postponed because of a frozen pitch two

hours before kick-off, which now means the Americans will start against Neath on Saturday, weather permitting.

Liverpool will make a round trip of nearly 200 miles to Worcester as they build up to Saturday's European Cup semi-final against Toulouse. The Welford Road pitch is covered in plastic sheeting and has a hot air tent suspended over it for further insurance against the severe weather. All other pitches in the area are snowbound, but the enterprising Worcester club have an indoor pitch which

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# Hot spring beckons for cosseted Quest

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hours before kick-off, which now means the Americans will start against Neath on Saturday, weather permitting.

Liverpool will make a round trip of nearly 200 miles to Worcester as they build up to Saturday's European Cup semi-final against Toulouse. The Welford Road pitch is covered in plastic sheeting and has a hot air tent suspended over it for further insurance against the severe weather. All other pitches in the area are snowbound, but the enterprising Worcester club have an indoor pitch which

Liverpool will use.

The dispute between Bath and their coach, Brian Ashton, is expected to be resolved this week. Ashton is concerned that his coaching and selectorial role has been eroded under the management of John Hall. He is also seeking a clearer definition of the chain of command at the Courage League club.





